



# We want to help you make the most of your doctor's visit



The Epilepsy Foundation Western/Central Pennsylvania is dedicated to helping you face the challenges that epilepsy creates in your life.

One way is by providing this brochure to help guide you through your physician visit. It is important for you to prepare information in advance to share with your doctor and to think about what questions you need to ask your doctor while you are there.

Use this brochure to prepare for your next visit. Bring the tear-off card to the meeting to aid you in communicating with your doctor about your specific situation. It will help your doctor to more thoroughly address your needs.

## Epilepsy Is A Unique Condition

As a person with epilepsy, you are in a unique circumstance. Since you may not be aware of what is happening during your seizures, you might not be able to remember things that could be vital to report to your doctor. And your doctor is not present to identify these symptoms or personally witness your seizures.

You will need to document what others witness during your seizures, and report the before and after effects. It is important to note as many specifics about your seizure activity as possible. Use the accompanying tear-off check list to record things you want to tell your doctor so that he or she has the information needed for a thorough evaluation.

## Tell All?

Yes. You need to be forthcoming with your doctor to be properly diagnosed. Have you had any seizures? Have you taken your medications as prescribed? Are you having any problems with medication side effects? Are you experiencing any new or different seizure activity?

## Stop and Ask?

Yes. If your doctor uses a word that you aren't familiar with, ask what it means before moving on in the conversation. You need to understand what you are being told. And take notes.

## Share Your Feelings

Don't be afraid to say you are not feeling well, or that you've been having seizures. Share your feelings to help your doctor know your complete situation and how to help.

It is okay to say things like, I'm unhappy about my medication side effects – I'm embarrassed – I'm afraid to drive – I'm afraid I'll hurt myself or someone else – I live in fear – I hate missing work – I'm concerned that I'm scaring my kids – I don't sleep well – I'm feeling depressed – I think I need counseling.



## What to Bring

- Someone who has witnessed your seizures and can comment on what they have seen
- Your notes on your seizure activity
- A list of all current medications (prescribed, over-the-counter, and herbal vitamin supplements) and how they are taken
- Information about any medical procedures performed prior to your first evaluation or since your last visit.

## Checklist of Symptoms to Tell Your Neurologist About

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blank stares   | <input type="checkbox"/> Senses during seizure:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picking at clothing  | ___ Sights  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chewing/smacking of lips   | ___ Smells  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Periods of being dazed and confused  | ___ Tastes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daydream-like behavior   | ___ Sounds  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falling over   | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication side effects: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duration of seizures   | ___ Dental changes                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequency of seizures  | ___ Facial hair                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What seizures look like  | ___ Rash  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand movements   | ___ Insomnia                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How you feel before and after a seizure  | ___ Weight changes                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How long it takes to regain awareness  | ___ Dizziness                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How you feel the seizures are affecting your quality of personal and work life | ___ Drowsiness                                    |
|   | ___ Depression                                    |
|   | ___ Memory loss                                   |
|   | ___ Muscle twitches                               |
|   | ___ Blurred vision                                |
|   | ___ Nausea  |
|   | ___ Other   |

## Some Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- Are there any foods, drinks, or activities to avoid?
- What time of day can I take my medications?
- Should I take medications with food?
- What if I forget a dose?
- How or when do I contact you if I have a seizure?
- If my seizures stop, can I stop my medication?
- If seizures continue, what other treatments exist?
- Can I drive?
- How can I better control my seizures?
- (For women) How will my medications affect oral contraception and/or pregnancy?
- When is my next appointment?
- What other medications can I take or should I avoid while taking my seizure medication?
- What if my child vomits shortly after taking his/her medicine? Should I repeat the dose?