

# EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is estimated to affect more than 500,000 people in the UK. This means that almost one in every 100 people has the condition.

The cells in the brain, known as neurons, conduct electrical signals and communicate with each other in the brain using chemical messengers. During a seizure, there are abnormal bursts of neurons firing off electrical impulses, which can cause the brain and body to behave strangely.

The severity of seizures varies from person to person. Some people may experience an odd feeling with no loss of awareness, while others may lose consciousness and have convulsions (uncontrollable shaking of the body).

Seizures can develop at any time following a traumatic brain injury but in most cases happen in the first year of recovery. The possibility of having seizures depends on a number of factors, including the type of injury suffered, the location of the injury and the extent of the damage caused.

Seizures may occur without any warning and can vary in length. However, in most cases they last for a set period of time specific to the individual person. For most people with epilepsy, treatment with medications called anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) is recommended. These medications cannot cure epilepsy, but they are often very effective in controlling seizures. Research shows that AEDs stop the seizures from occurring in up to 80 per cent of cases. People that have suffered a severe brain injury are often prescribed AED's as a preventative measure. However, it can take some time to find the right type and correct dose of AED before your seizures can be controlled.

In a few cases, surgery may be used to remove a specific area of the brain that is affected or to install an electrical device that can help control seizures.

While epilepsy is different for everyone, there are some general rules that can make living with the condition easier.

It's important to stay healthy through regular exercise, getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet and avoiding excessive drinking.

You may have to think about your epilepsy before you undertake things such as driving, using contraception and planning a pregnancy.

**[paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk](http://paulforbrainrecovery.co.uk)**

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