

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.

In today's blog, we will look at ways of reducing or preventing the number of seizures. Understand that the information contained in the blog today is not a panacea for all seizures. The tips below may not be successful at all with your loved one. However, anything is worth a try even if it reduces the number and severity of seizures.

If your loved one has epilepsy, or another condition that puts them at risk of recurring seizures, it is important to take preventive measures to stop them from occurring.

A few things to note about seizure prevention

Keep in mind that there are different types of seizures that may affect different parts of your brain. Each person's experiences with seizures may vary, too.

Doing so can also help reduce the chances of developing related conditions, like:

- difficulty with thinking
- injuries
- death

Seizure prevention is dependent on an overall management and treatment plan, such as taking your prescribed medications. Talk to your healthcare professional about the following measures that may help. Seizure prevention and epilepsy management depend on taking your prescribed medications as well as maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle.

1. Take your medication as prescribed

Anti-epileptic medications are designed to help prevent seizures. You should never stop taking these medications without your doctor's approval — even if your condition seems to be improving.

In fact, not taking the prescribed medications properly puts your loved one at risk of uncontrolled seizures. Withdrawal seizures can occur if you skip medication. Medication toxicity from taking too much at a time can result in adverse effects, which may involve seizures.

2. This tip is to be considered for an older loved one with epilepsy. Do not consume alcohol.

Alcohol is not recommended for people with epilepsy, due to an increased risk of seizures. You may help prevent future episodes by avoiding alcohol.

3. Practice stress management

Stress can be a trigger for seizures in epilepsy. It may help you reduce your risk of seizures if you manage your stress by:

- getting enough sleep
- exercising
- taking time to relax.

4. Maintain a sleep schedule

Waking up and going to bed at the same time every day can help you maintain a sleep schedule. Tiredness and short-term sleep deprivation are considered triggers for seizures, so regular sleep can help prevent them.

5. Keep a consistent meal schedule

Hypoglycemia from skipping a meal can cause a seizure, particularly for people with diabetes. It is a good practice to maintain a consistent meal schedule and have fast-acting sources of glucose on you at all times if you have diabetes.

6. Avoid flashing lights

According to the Epilepsy Society, it is estimated that about 3 percent of people with epilepsy have a rare form called photosensitive epilepsy. With this type of epilepsy, your seizures may be triggered by flashing lights or contrasting patterns of light.

If your loved one is photosensitive, such exposure to lights could trigger a seizure immediately. While anti-epileptic drugs can help prevent seizures, it is also important to avoid flashing lights and images, as well as those in geometric patterns. Playing video games with rapidly flashing graphics may also trigger seizures in some people. Polarized sunglasses may help with photosensitivity as well.

If you are suddenly exposed to flashing lights or patterns, quickly cover one or both eyes with your hand. According to the Epilepsy Society, this may help prevent the onset of a seizure.

7. Protect yourself from head injuries

Head injuries can lead to a single seizure or recurrent seizures in someone who does not have epilepsy. The related seizures may occur weeks — or even months — after the injury. According to the Epilepsy Foundation, once you've had a seizure following a head injury, your chances of having another seizure double.

A head injury can also trigger a seizure in someone who already has epilepsy. So, it is important to protect them from future head injuries and the possibility of more related seizures.

Make sure they wear a helmet when bicycling, skating, or playing contact sports. Talk with a medical professional about stability exercises to help decrease their risk of falls.

8 Call a medical professional if your infant has a high fever

Some children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years may be at risk of developing febrile seizures. These are triggered by fevers of 101°F (38°C) or higher and may accompany infections.

Not every child with a high fever will develop a febrile seizure, and the episode may occur hours later. Call for emergency medical help if your child has a seizure. Children with febrile seizures may be at a higher risk of having future episodes, so medication may be necessary to prevent them.

10. Consider surgery

Northwestern Medicine estimates 20 percent of people with epilepsy may be candidates for minimally invasive surgery if medications don't work to prevent seizures.

Some possibilities you may discuss with your child's doctor are:

- laser ablation
- vagus nerve stimulator (VNS)
- responsive neurostimulator (RNS) insertion

It is totally possible that you have tried none, some or all of the tips listed above. It is always prudent to consult with your child's neurologist or epileptologist before trying anything new.

Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.

Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

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