

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.

Should you have an Epilepsy Bracelet? That is a question that Max Mugambi sought out to answer. Epilepsy is a spectrum of disorders that involve the central nervous system (brain and spine). Seizures are the primary symptom of epilepsy. These seizures may cause people to have unusual sensations or emotions, behave in unexpected ways, or experience convulsions or loss of consciousness. Because seizures can happen at any time, some people with epilepsy choose to wear an epilepsy bracelet — a medical ID that lets others around them know the appropriate course of action in the event of a seizure. What exactly is an epilepsy bracelet? Is wearing one right for you? Read on to learn more and decide whether you or your loved one should start wearing an epilepsy bracelet.

What Is an Epilepsy Bracelet?

An epilepsy bracelet is a bracelet used to communicate that its wearer has epilepsy, as well as to provide directions on what can be done during a seizure. If you or a loved one is living with epilepsy, you know how challenging seizures can be. They can cause immobility or uncontrolled movement, injury, confusion, and inability to speak.

Furthermore, seizures can come at any time and occur anywhere — at work or school or on the road. Depending on where the seizure happens, the people around you might not always recognize what is happening or know what steps to take. This can be dangerous because, if not properly taken care of, a person having a seizure may be injured. For this reason, an epilepsy bracelet is crucial for people who have seizures. Not only does it let others know you have epilepsy, but it also informs them of other vital information (including any medications you are taking to manage your epilepsy).

Medical IDs for Epilepsy

Epilepsy bracelets are just one form of medical ID — a piece of jewelry or a card that helps people around you offer the right help in case of a seizure. Paramedics usually check for medical information on a person's body, in a wallet or purse, and, increasingly commonly, on their cellphone. A survey of emergency medical professionals conducted by American Medical ID found that more than 95 percent of respondents look for medical IDs during health emergencies. Medical IDs like epilepsy bracelets provide vital health information to others in the event of a seizure.

Medical IDs are customized to reflect your unique health status. They often include medical information such as:

Your full name

- Your epilepsy diagnosis, as well as any other medical conditions (including diabetes, asthma, or serious allergies to foods or medications)
- Any epilepsy medications you take, such as antiepileptic drugs (AEDs)

- Emergency contacts, such as a parent, spouse, or close friend

There are many options for medical IDs other than a bracelet. Watches, necklaces, ID cards, tags, pendants, and key fobs are all options for medical identification. Most medical jewelry allows you to engrave the information of your choice, while others provide slots for paper inserts. In the United States, medical IDs usually have the “star of life” symbol, representing emergency medical services. This signifies the wearer has a medical condition that emergency services should be aware of.

Depending on the style of jewelry and the seller, you can get a piece of medical ID jewelry for a few dollars for silicon bracelets or \$15 or more for engraved metal styles. However, Epilepsy Alliance Ohio provides Epilepsy ID Bracelets free of charge. If you would like a free Epilepsy ID Bracelet, please contact our office at 513-721-2905. Epilepsy Alliance Ohio will be happy to get an Epilepsy ID Bracelet to you.

Smart Medical IDs

Apart from jewelry, there are other methods of communicating your epilepsy and medical information. Some smartphones have features that let people access specific types of medical information from their lock screen. This allows medical professionals to see your health information without needing a password for your phone.

If you have an iPhone, you can set up a smart medical ID by following these instructions. If you have an Android or other non-iOS phone, you may need to download a third-party mobile app. Simply search for “medical ID app” on the Google Play Store or your phone manufacturer’s app store.

Near-Field Communication

Near-field communication (NFC) allows smartphones and other similar devices to communicate with other technologies and transfer information — including medical information — by touch. If you have a wristband, card, or key fob that uses NFC, medical personnel will be able to access your medical information on a secure website in case of emergency. This information can include anything you think would be important in a health emergency, including care plans, prescriptions, and medical documents.

Audio Medical IDs

Audio medical IDs are small audio recorders that clip onto your clothing. They allow you to save information in an audio file responders can listen to. You can record a message that includes details about first aid or any relevant medical information. In the event of a seizure, when you are unable to speak, the person responding to you can easily press play to listen to your prerecorded information.

USB Medical IDs

Another alternative is a USB device that holds your medical information, which you can attach to a dog tag or wristband. With USB medical IDs, it is important to keep in mind that medical information is sensitive and confidential and should only be stored and accessed securely. When

looking to buy a USB medical ID, make sure it has an encryption feature with proper security guarantees from the manufacturer.

Communicating Effectively

Seizures do not necessarily require emergency medical attention — especially for people diagnosed with epilepsy. According to the CDC, it is not necessary to call 911 (or your country's emergency number) if a person has had seizures before or is known to have epilepsy, if the seizure lasts for fewer than five minutes, if the person is not pregnant or diabetic, and if the person does not injure themselves during the seizure. Talk to your medical professional about when it might be appropriate for you or a loved one to seek emergency care for a seizure.

Without a medical ID, other people will not know if the seizure is epileptic or if it is the result of another medical condition. Having a medical ID can help those around you know how to respond to a seizure.

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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