

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.

Despite scientific advances, it is unfortunate that even today, there are fears, misunderstandings, discrimination, and social stigma surrounding a person with epilepsy. So, we reached out to Dr. Nirmala Lahoti, General Physician at Practo, and asked her to bust some common myths related to epilepsy. Read on to know all that she shared!

1. Epilepsy is a rare disorder.

No. Epilepsy is not a very rare disorder. It affects fifty million people worldwide. In India, epilepsy has been identified as a public health issue. It is found to be the second leading condition affecting the brain in both the urban and rural populations. It is estimated that in India (with a population of more than one billion), there are 6 to 10 million people with epilepsy.

2. People with epilepsy are mentally ill.

No. Epilepsy is not the same as mental illness and, in fact, many people with seizures do not develop mental health problems. There may be associated mood problems like anxiety or depression in a patient with epilepsy on account of their disease and associated issues.

3. People with epilepsy are violent or crazy.

No. The belief that people with epilepsy are violent is an unfortunate image that is both wrong and destructive. People with epilepsy have no greater tendency toward severe irritability and aggressive behaviors than other people. Many features of seizures and their immediate after-effects can be easily misunderstood as "crazy" or "violent behavior". During seizures, some people may not respond to questions, may speak gibberish, undress, repeat a word or phrase, crumple important papers, or may appear frightened and scream. Some are confused immediately after a seizure and if they are restrained or prevented from moving about, they can become agitated and combative. However, once the attack is over, they return to normal and usually display normal behavior in between attacks.

4. Children with epilepsy are dull.

Except for children who are born with obvious mental health conditions, children with epilepsy have normal intelligence and should be encouraged by parents and teachers to attend school and complete their education.

5. Epilepsy is a curse or wrath of God.

No. It is unfortunate that even today, we have to face such questions. Epilepsy has nothing to do with curses, possession, or other supernatural processes, such as punishment for past sins. Like asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure, epilepsy is a medical condition of the brain and can affect anyone irrespective of their "deeds".

6. Epilepsy spreads through touching or coughing.

No, epilepsy does not spread through touching or coughing. People who are having an attack need help and the onlookers should not refrain from helping the person because of such irrational beliefs.

7. Use of an onion, metal, etc., helps in terminating an ongoing epileptic attack.

No. Some people think that an epileptic attack can be terminated by making the person smell onions or dirty shoes, or by placing a metal key in the person's hand. These are irrational beliefs. Relatives, friends, and teachers of people with epilepsy should be aware of the measures to be taken during an epileptic attack.

8. Epilepsy medications are ineffective.

No. Epilepsy medicines are very essential for the control of epileptic attacks and should not be neglected. The complete treatment should be discussed with your doctor and the treatment should be adhered to.

9. Life of a person with epilepsy is miserable.

No. The life of a person with epilepsy can be very manageable and very similar to the life of people without epilepsy provided you have a positive approach towards life. An especially important aspect in managing epilepsy is embracing the treatment as an integral part of your life. Daily intake of medicines can sometimes put you down. However, do not let this affect your life.

10. Epilepsy is a hindrance in leading a happy and successful life.

No. People with epilepsy can live a happy and successful life. With the advent of new medicines, availability of medical care, and increased awareness of the condition, it has become possible for a person with epilepsy to lead a good life. There are many famous poets, writers, and athletes with epilepsy who have excelled in their respective fields. A positive approach towards the problems in life is a key to success and contentment. Our negative outlook towards the condition should be challenged and this will certainly help people lead a normal and happy life.

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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