

# Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

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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's 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're 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.

Generally, 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 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. You can also obtain a free medical ID card from Epilepsy Action or print one at home, if you would prefer not to spend money on a more personalized option.

### **Smart Medical IDs**

Apart from jewelry and cards, there are other computer-based 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’s 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.

### **Medical ID Tattoos**

Some people opt for medical ID tattoos — tattoos that provide the same identifying information as traditional medical IDs. As one member of MyEpilepsyTeam wrote, “My epilepsy bracelet keeps on breaking, and I have to buy a new one. I am thinking of having a tattoo that says I suffer from epilepsy.” Talk to your doctor to determine whether it’s safe for you to get a tattoo. You should also inform your tattoo artist that you have epilepsy. They may take precautionary measures to prevent you from injuring yourself, in case a seizure does occur. While this may not

be an issue if your seizures are controlled, if your seizures are uncontrolled and unpredictable, it may be better to wait until your epilepsy becomes more stable before getting a tattoo.

Talk to your doctor 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's 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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