

6 Antiepileptic Drugs

The majority of people can have their seizures controlled by taking appropriate antiepileptic drugs (AEDs). However, AEDs do not cure epilepsy—their aim is to control seizures. They may be used singly (monotherapy) or in combination (polytherapy) to control seizures

AEDs are available in a range of doses and formats, e.g. tablets, liquids, nasal sprays, injections and rectal applications.

AEDs can have 2 names:

- generic/chemical name, e.g. sodium valproate
- brand/trade name, e.g. Epilim.

It is important to always take whichever version of the drug, generic or brand, your doctor has prescribed as formulations can vary slightly.

The aim of the treatment is to:

- achieve maximum seizure control with minimum side effects
- tailor drug treatment to best suit the needs of each person.

First Line AEDs. Prescribed alone when treatment is started

<u>Brand</u>	<u>Generic—Chemical</u>
Carbagen	carbamazepine
Carbagen SR	carbamazepine (modified release)
Convulex	valproic acid
Emeside/Zarontin	ethosuximide
Epilim	sodium valproate
Epilim Chrono	sodium valproate (modified release)
Episenta	sodium valproate (modified release)
Keppra	levetiracetam
Lamictal	lamotrigine
Orlept	sodium valproate
Tegretol	carbamazepine
Tegretol Retard	carbamazepine (modified release)
Trileptal	oxcarbazepine

Second Line AEDs. Usually prescribed as an addition to an existing first-line drug

<u>Brand</u>	<u>Generic—Chemical</u>
Diamox	acetazolamide
Diamox SR	acetazolamide (modified release)
Epanutin	phenytoin
Frisium	clobazam
Gabitril	tiagabine
Inovelon	rufinamide
Lyrica	pregabalin
Mysoline	primidone
Neurontin	gabapentin
Nootropil	piracetam
Rivotril	clonazepam
	phenobarbital (phenobarbitone)
Sabril	vigabatrin
Topamax	topiramate
Vimpat	lacosamide
Zonegran	zonisamide

AEDs for treating serial seizures and status epilepticus+

<u>Brand</u>	<u>Generic—Chemical</u>
Valium	diazepam
	midazolam

+Serial seizures and status epilepticus

In the case of tonic clonic seizures, the following situations require medical attention.
Status epilepticus is a medical emergency requiring urgent treatment.

Prolonged seizures: seizures lasting over 5 minutes or 2 minutes longer than usual.

Serial seizures: seizures occurring one after another without full recovery in between.

Status epilepticus: seizure activity persisting for 30 minutes or more without return to normal breathing or full consciousness.

Prolonged seizures, serial seizures and status epilepticus can occur with **all** types of seizure and require medical attention.

AEDs:

- are prescribed free of charge along with other prescribed medicines to people with epilepsy (form EC82A available from GPs and pharmacies)
- should be taken as prescribed in a 24 hour period
- should not be stopped or changed without medical supervision (can have serious repercussions)
- can produce unwanted side effects -
 - weight loss/gain
 - unsteadiness/drowsiness
 - poor concentration/upset moods
 - rashes (report these immediately to your doctor)
- can be adversely affected by
 - illnesses/infections/fevers
 - other prescribed medicines
 - contraceptive pill
 - some antibiotics
 - some over-the-counter medicines
 - some herbal remedies
 - some aromatherapy oils
 - alcohol and recreational drugs.

AEDs and pregnancy:

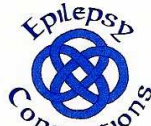
- seek preconception counselling
- work out with your doctor the way to achieve best seizure control to minimise any risks to your unborn child.

AEDs and seizure recording:

Keep a record of your seizures and any side effects and discuss with your doctor at your next appointment/annual review.

AEDs can be stored on a daily/weekly basis in pill boxes available from pharmacies/ Epilepsy Connections.

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Supporting people with epilepsy

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