

Epilepsy—Safety in educational environments

The majority of people with epilepsy have their seizures controlled with medication and lead a full and active life. The aim of this leaflet is to identify and minimise risk to enable you to do that.

Safety is a major consideration for everyone but additional safeguards may be needed for people with uncontrollable epilepsy.

When attending school, college or university it's important that your own and others' safety needs are considered and assessed in relation to your epilepsy.

Steps to safer learning

The first step is to discuss your epilepsy with the special needs advisor, guidance staff member, student advisor to allow your needs to be assessed.

You can be included in most activities provided adjustments are put in place and the guidelines indicated below are followed.

It is also important for your institution to have a regularly updated care plan in place, which includes:

- your seizure pattern
- triggers
- treatment
- what to do in the event of a seizure
- any emergency protocols.

You will find a useful Epilepsy Checklist at the end of this booklet, which you should complete and give to the appropriate member of staff.

The next step is to carry out a risk assessment of the overall environment including:

- stairs/lift
- movement around inside and outside the building
- laboratories
- home economics rooms
- technical drawing, woodwork, metalwork rooms
- toilet and shower facilities
- gyms
- travel
- access to a quiet room for recovery after seizures.

Computers

See electronic media in the Safety—Leisure and pleasure leaflet.

Whiteboards in schools and colleges are safe.

Sports and extracurricular activities

It's really important that students with epilepsy are included in field trips, excursions, camps, holidays etc with appropriate risk assessment and adjustment as per the Equalities Act (2010).

Information in relation to the Education (Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 can be obtained from Enquire. www.enquire.org.uk Tel: 0345 123 2303.

See the leaflet Safety in Sport.

It is important to be aware of high risk areas, e.g. in the gym, swimming pool.

When taking part in most sports and games it is wise to be supervised as seizures can sometimes be triggered due to excitement and heat.

Medication

If you need to take medication during the day, or on external trips, provision for its storage needs to be made in accordance with the policies of the relevant institution.

Epilepsy Training

Epilepsy Connections can provide training in epilepsy awareness, first aid for seizures, and the administration of emergency treatments for staff and student teachers.

Epilepsy Connections also provides tailored information about epilepsy to students of all ages.

An Epilepsy Checklist

Completing this checklist will enable educational staff to have a clear understanding of your epilepsy and what precautions may need to be put in place to ensure your safety.

1. Describe your seizures.
2. How long do your seizures usually last?
3. How often do your seizures occur?
4. Do you have any warning of a seizure coming on?

YES NO

5. Are you aware of anything that triggers your seizures?
6. How often do you take medication?
7. Will it be necessary to take medication during the hours you are in school/college/university?

YES NO

If YES, provide details.

8. What kind of first aid/assistance may you require when you have a seizure?
9. Do you sometimes need rescue medication/care following a seizure?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details.

Do you wish anyone to be contacted if you have a seizure? If so, provide emergency contact details.

10. How long does it take you to recover?

11. Are you likely to be incontinent during a seizure?

YES - Bladder Bowel NO

12. Do you experience any changes in your behaviour or emotions before or after a seizure?

Give details. Before: After:

13. Do you have other medical conditions? If YES, please provide details.

14. Has anyone – parents/GP – recommended any limitations on your activities?

15. Have you/your epilepsy specialist provided a copy of your Care Plan?

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Supporting people with epilepsy

Head Office

100 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6DH
tel: 0141.248.4125
fax: 0141.248.5887

Forth Valley Fieldwork Service

Administration Offices
Falkirk Community Hospital
Westburn Avenue
Falkirk FK1 5QE
tel: 01324 673750

Email: info@epilepsyconnections.org.uk
Website: www.epilepsyconnections.org.uk