

EPILEPSY

DEBUNKING MYTHS AND IDENTIFYING WAYS TO HELP

EPILEPSY IS A DISORDER THAT IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD. WE HIGHLIGHT THE FACTS OVER FICTION.



WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

"Epilepsy is a chronic, neurological disorder that causes interference with your brain's electrical system.



DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

- *You can swallow your tongue during a seizure.* It is physically impossible to swallow your tongue. If left on your back, your tongue may obstruct your airway, but it's not possible to swallow your tongue.
- *Epilepsy is contagious.* You cannot catch epilepsy from another person
- *You should force something into somebody's mouth having a seizure.* Absolutely not. This could damage teeth, the patient's jaw and gums.
- *Only kids get epilepsy.* Epilepsy may affect people of any age, but in our older population the causes may be as a result of health conditions rather than genetic factors.
- *People with epilepsy should not be in jobs of responsibility.* Epilepsy is a chronic medical problem, which can be managed with medication. When this condition is well-managed, those suffering from epilepsy can be active and valuable members of society. Some people may be able to identify what triggers their epilepsy. This may include lack of sleep, illness, stress, bright or flashing lights, caffeine or alcohol, and skipping meals. Where a trigger is identified these triggers should be avoided if possible.



WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE SUFFERS A SEIZURE

- Ease the person to the floor.
- Turn the person gently onto one side - this will help the person breathe.
- Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp. This can prevent injury.
- Put something soft and flat, like a folded jacket or a pillow, under his or her head.
- Remove eyeglasses.
- Loosen ties or anything around the neck that may make it hard to breathe.



CALL FOR HELP

Call ER24 on 084 124 if seizures continue (usually longer than 5 minutes).