EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND
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Using Smart Phone Apps

For many people, smartphones have become an essential way of keeping connected, staying up-to-date with news, taking photos and playing games. Essentially, they are a small computer in our bag or pocket, which we can customise with applications, usually called 'apps', that do different tasks.

Many people living with epilepsy are now using electronic smartphone apps to assist in monitoring and managing their epilepsy. There are a wide range of apps available, and most are free of charge. Increasingly, people living with epilepsy are finding apps beneficial in self-care. Key features of many of the apps include:

- Seizure diary: an electronic journal so that you can record seizure activity, what happens during them, how often they are occurring, triggers, medication side-effects and a place to write down any questions you might have for your doctor

- Medication reminder: so you can set up alerts/alarms which remind you to take your medication at the correct time, take photos of your different medications as a visual reminder for you or others, and remind you when prescriptions need to be refilled

- Personal information I.C.E App: In Case of Emergency or medical app)a place where you can store your doctor's contact details, emergency contact details, and epilepsy diagnosis information. This MUST be accessible from the locked screen.

- First-aid instructions: instructions for how best to help someone having a seizure, how to put someone into the recovery position, and when to call an ambulance

- Export information: allows you to print out or email reports to your doctor or others in your healthcare team

- Audio and video functions: allows you or others to record questions, or record seizure activity

There are even apps for people on epilepsy-specific diets, such as the Ketogenic Diet or Modified Atkins Diet.

As every app is different, you should look for one that best suits you. It is a good idea to read reviews, terms and conditions, and be aware of privacy issues, before downloading or purchasing an app. It may also be good to participate in community discussions about apps on online epilepsy

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support forums on various social media platforms. Also, remember that an app is never a substitute for medical information and care.

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