

Anti-Seizure Medication (ASM) Selection

There are approximately 20 different [Anti-Seizure medications](#) ASMs currently available in New Zealand. Some ASMs can only be taken by adults, whereas others are suitable for treating both [children](#) and adults.

Sometimes your doctor will determine that a particular ASM is not suitable for you and will discuss alternative ones. The reasons for choosing or avoiding particular ASMs could be due to the type of seizures you experience, possible side-effects, other medications you are taking, or other matters.

Some ASMs can interfere with the effectiveness of certain types of contraception (e.g. 'the pill' and implants) and put you at risk of falling pregnant. It may mean that your contraception will need to change or your doctor may recommend alternative birth control methods. It's a good idea to discuss contraception with your doctor so that you can work together to choose one that suits you. For more information visit the [contraception page](#).

Some medications, either over the counter ones or those prescribed for other conditions, can lower a person's seizure threshold. A lower seizure threshold means that you are more susceptible to having a seizure. Such medications may include mood stabilisers (anti-depressants), psychiatric medications (anti-psychotics) and even some hormonal contraceptives. Any concerns about medications and potential effects on your ASMs should be raised with your doctor.

Some ASMs can affect an unborn baby, so doctors may change medications in women planning to start a family or already pregnant. Although, sometimes a change in a woman's ASMs is not possible, as the risk of seizure activity is too great. But remember, more than 95% of pregnant women living with epilepsy deliver a healthy baby. For more information visit the [Pregnancy page](#).



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