EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND
Kia titiro ki te tangata | See the person

Medical Reviews



Having regular appointments with your doctor is important for reviewing your epilepsy and treatment, or discussing that of your child or another person you care for. How often you see your doctor will usually be determined by how successfully you have responded to treatment and any related issues you may be experiencing.

People living with uncontrolled epilepsy tend to see their neurologist or epileptologist more frequently than those whose epilepsy is under control. And some people living with controlled epilepsy may find that their care is eventually managed through their GP. Depending on need, children's care may be managed by a paediatrician or paediatric neurologist or combination of both.

Regular appointments are a good chance to talk to your doctor about how your treatment is going, and any concerns you may have (such as ASM side effects or the impacts of epilepsy more generally). Remember, living with epilepsy often involves more than just managing seizures and medication and can extend to issues related to safety, lifestyle, stress and relationships. Depending on what is going on in your life your doctor may suggest that other specialists become involved in your care, such as psychologists or social workers.

PREPARING FOR YOUR REGULAR MEDICAL REVIEW

To get the most out of your medical appointment it can be a good idea to bring a list of questions for, or information that you want to share, with your doctor. This is not only useful for you but will greatly assist your doctor to assess whether your current treatment plan is meeting your needs.

Some information and matters to consider include:

- Your seizure activity. Keep a diary tracking seizure activity and provide your doctor with an

update at each appointment

- ASM- side-effects. Keep a record of any side effects you are experiencing and discuss these with your doctor, as your medication type or dose may need to be adjusted. Or your doctor may want to assist you to develop strategies for managing ASM side effects
- Lifestyle issues. Have there been any changes to your daily life (social, work, education) and is your epilepsy, seizure activity or medication affecting these? If so, have a chat to your doctor about whether you need some support
- Changes to your mood and feelings. Are you having any difficulties coping or are you feeling stressed and worried? People living with epilepsy are at a higher risk of experiencing depression or anxiety, so it's a good idea to chat about your current feelings in case adjustments to your treatment plan or getting some extra support would help you
- Safety concerns. If you are worried about your safety as a result of seizure activity or taking ASMs be sure to discuss these with your doctor, as together you can explore strategies for making you feel safer at home and in the community
- Driving issues. Have you had a recent seizure which means you are unable to drive and need to know how long you need to stop driving. Are you considering applying for your licence or need to have your licence reinstated? If this applies to you speak to your doctor as they may need to provide a report for submission to your state driving licence authority. Before discussing these matters with your doctor, have a look at our driving page, which will help you to understand your rights and responsibilities.

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