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

How is the Surgery Performed?

Every surgery is different and only your neurologist and neurosurgeon can advise of what your specific surgery (or that of your child) will entail. However, there are some common aspects of epilepsy surgery.

To avoid infection, some of your hair will be shaved so that the surgeon can gain access to the section of skull which will be removed during the operation. Where possible the surgical team will shave it in such a way that other parts of your hair will cover it after the operation. You are usually under anaesthetic and asleep when this is done.

Throughout the surgery your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels are being monitored. This is to help keep you safe throughout the operation.

Generally epilepsy surgery is performed while you are under a general anaesthetic, which means that you are asleep throughout the entire operation. Depending on the type of surgery a small part of your skull will be removed so that the surgeon has access to the part of the brain that is being operated on.

Occasionally, some people have a type of surgery which involves them being woken up during parts of the operation so that the team can determine which parts of the brain are controlling movement or language. Often people don't even remember being woken up during the surgery, or if they do they only remember small parts of it – but either way the person doesn't feel any pain.

At the end of the operation the skull bone is placed back into its original position and screwed to the surrounding bone for healing. Epilepsy brain surgery can take several hours.

The best person to outline exactly what your surgery will entail is your neurosurgeon, so be sure to make a list of surgery related questions before your appointment.

© 2026 Epilepsy NZ