EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND
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What are the Risks of Epilepsy Surgery?

Any surgery comes with possible risks, and it is important that you understand these before making your decision to have neurosurgery. After the results of your pre-surgical tests have been evaluated, your neurologist and neurosurgeon, as well as other members of your health care team, will discuss surgical risks and benefits with you. They will also give you an estimation of your chance of seizure freedom.

When it comes to epilepsy-related surgery, the risks will very much depend on the type of surgery being performed and any other health matters specific to you. Possible risks may include problems with memory, a partial loss of sight, weakness on one side of the body, depression or other mood problems. It is not uncommon for people to feel 'flat' after surgery also. Any surgery also carries potential risks related to anaesthesia, or may result in unanticipated complications which arise during the procedure. The risks of unexpected complications are low, but still important to consider.

Risks will vary from person to person, and may be only temporary in some cases. Your health care team will have also evaluated the possible benefits of surgery for you. So, before making a surgical decision it is important to ask as many questions as you can to understand the possible risks and benefits prior to making your surgery decision. This is often referred to as weighing up the 'risk vs benefits' of surgery, allowing you to make an informed decision.

It is also important to remember that your health care team will never recommend surgery if they have determined that the risks are likely to outweigh the benefits. Your health and quality of life is at the forefront of their decision making and recommendations.

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