



EPILEPSY

Introduction

Around one in 200 children in the UAE have epilepsy. With a few sensible precautions, most will be able to do things that other children can do. However, some children have more complex epilepsy and need specialist help and support. This information will tell you some of the issues that affect children with epilepsy.



About Epilepsy

There are many types of epilepsy. If your child has epilepsy, it means they have a tendency to have seizures (sometimes call fits). Epilepsy can begin at any age. Electrical activity is happening in our brain all the time. A seizure happens when there is a sudden burst of intense electrical activity. This causes the brain to deviate from its

normal working pattern which

There are many different types of seizures which are classified based on where in the brain the epileptic activity starts. Giving the seizure the right name is important for doctors to prescribe the right medication.

Children with Epilepsy

Diagnosing Epilepsy

If your child has had a seizure they should be seen by a pediatrician or neurologist to help decide whether your child has epilepsy. This doctor may ask for an eye witness account of the episode, a video recording of the event and may arrange for them to have the following tests.

EEG: The EEG tells doctors about the electrical activity in the brain. During the EEG, a technician places harmless electrodes on the scalp, using a special glue or sticky tape.

Then the electrodes are connected to the EEG machine, which records the electrical signals in the brain on a computer. **MRI:** The MRI uses radio waves and a magnetic field, rather than X-rays. It can show if there's a structural cause for someone's epilepsy.



Treating epilepsy

Most children with epilepsy are prescribed epilepsy medicines. The aim of treating seizures with epilepsy medicines is to control your child's seizures, so that they can get on with their life. There are many different epilepsy medicines available and your child's epilepsy specialist will recommend the best one for your child. It may take a while to find the right dose of the right medicine for your child. But once it is found, they have a very good chance of being seizure free. In fact, around seven in 10 children with epilepsy can become seizure free. Once their seizures are controlled, they will still usually need to take epilepsy medicine for a while. Sometimes, they may need to take it for many years.

Your child should have a review of their epilepsy and treatment with their epilepsy specialist at least two to three times a year. This is to make sure that they are still on the right dose of the right medicine for their epilepsy. It is also to make sure they are not having any side-effects from their epilepsy medicine.

If your child is old enough, they might be able to recognise things that make their seizures more likely. These are called triggers. Tiredness, lack of sleep and stress are some of the more common triggers in children. A very small number of children with epilepsy have their seizures triggered by flashing or flickering lights. This is photosensitive epilepsy. Some children say that they can avoid seizures by avoiding their triggers. But not all children have things that trigger their seizures.

Risk for children with epilepsy

Children with epilepsy are at risk of seizure related injuries. Children who have epilepsy because of another condition, or have only recently been diagnosed with epilepsy are at highest risk. This is because they are more likely to be having seizures than other children. A child could have a seizure in a dangerous place. Or the seizure itself may be the cause of death. But the reasons for these deaths are not always known. Where a child with epilepsy has died suddenly, and no reason can be found, it is called sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP).

Epilepsy: Behaviour and education

Behaviour problems are common in children. This is true whether or not they have epilepsy. However, some children have behaviour problems that are related to their epilepsy or epilepsy medicine. If you are concerned about your child's behaviour, speak to their epilepsy doctor to see if they can help.

Many children and young people with epilepsy go to mainstream schools. And some do very well. However, some children with epilepsy don't achieve as much as they could. This may or may not be related to their epilepsy or epilepsy medicine. If you believe your child is not doing as well as they could, speak to their teacher or special educational needs co-ordinator. They will be able to assess your child to try to find ways to help them.

Supporting your child with epilepsy

Some children deal with their epilepsy and seizures in a very matter of fact way. Others feel embarrassed about having seizures, particularly if they happen at school or with their friends. One of the best ways to support your child is by talking to them about their epilepsy, and finding out what their main concerns are. You could take information into school, so that staff can explain epilepsy to the other children. They can find information for themselves on Epilepsy Action's children's and teenage websites. Go to: kids.epilepsy.org.uk/education or youngpeople.epilepsy.org.uk