



Information about epilepsy

**Easy
Read**

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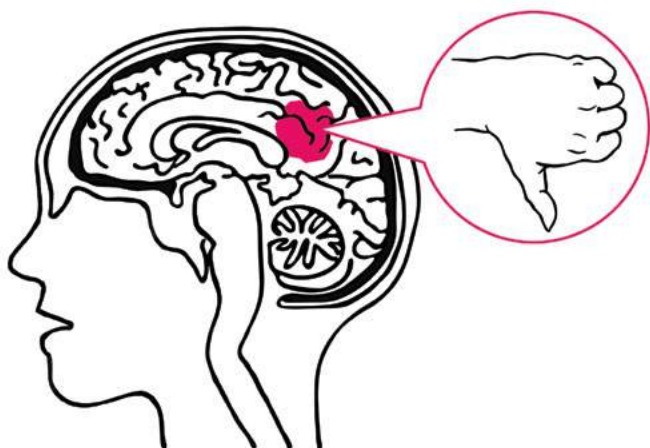
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Information about epilepsy



What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is having fits because of something happening in your brain.
Some people call fits seizures.

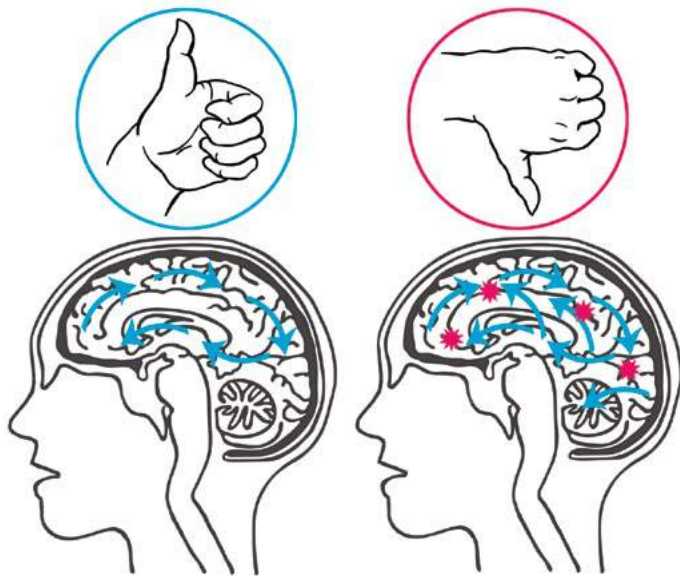


Why have I got epilepsy?

You might have epilepsy because you have some damage to your brain.



Sometimes the doctors don't know why someone has epilepsy.



What happens to make me have a fit?

Usually messages get sent round in your brain in a good way. Sometimes messages get sent round too fast and bits of your brain have too much going on. This can make you have a fit.

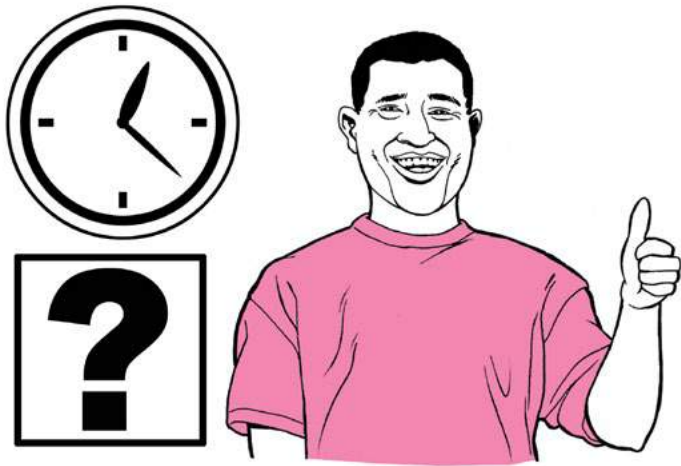
What questions will the doctor ask?

How did you feel before the fit?

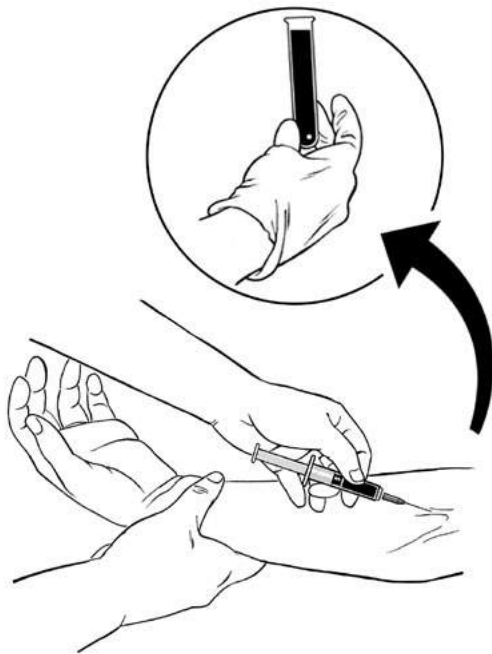


What did the fit look like?





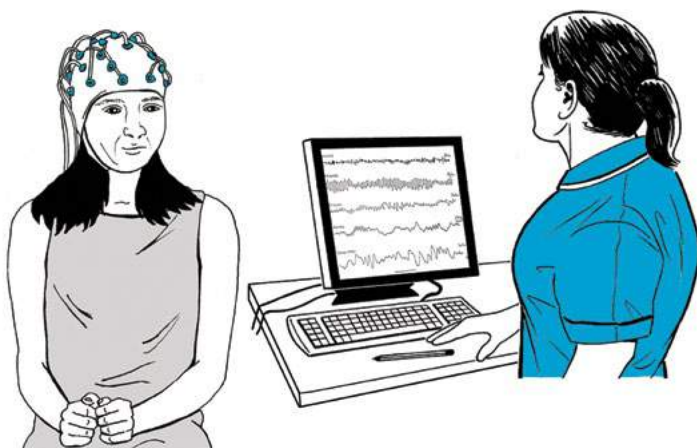
How long did it take to feel better?

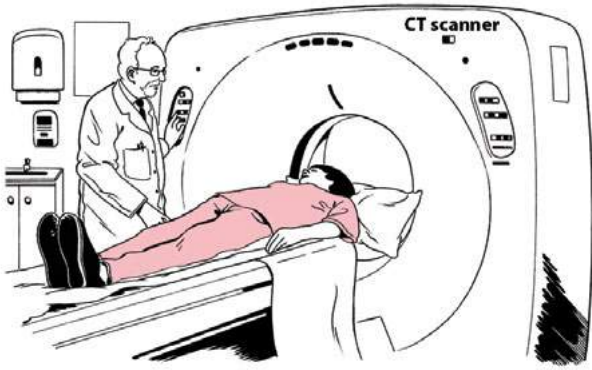


What tests might the doctor do when I've had a fit?

- Blood tests

- An EEG which gives information about what's happening in your brain





- A brain scan called a CT or MRI

None of these can say you definitely have epilepsy. But they will help the doctor decide.

Does everyone with epilepsy have the same sort of fits?

There are lots of different sorts of fits:

Tonic-clonic fits

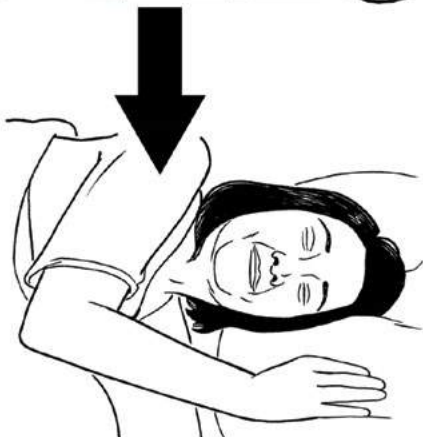
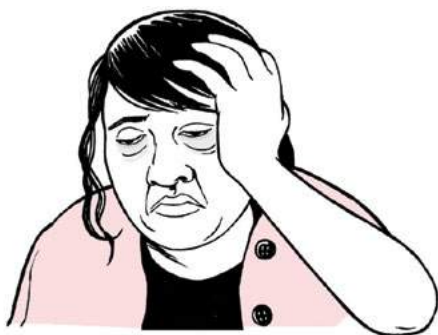
One is called a tonic-clonic fit. This is where you go stiff, you fall down, and then you shake. Also you don't know what's happening. You might wet yourself.

Focal fits



These are fits that affect some of your brain. Here are some things people can feel or do when they have a focal fit:

- A funny feeling in your tummy
- Suddenly feeling very scared
- Fiddling with things like your buttons



- Making the same movement lots of times

- Hearing what someone is saying to you but not being able to understand it.

Why do I sometimes feel awful after a fit?

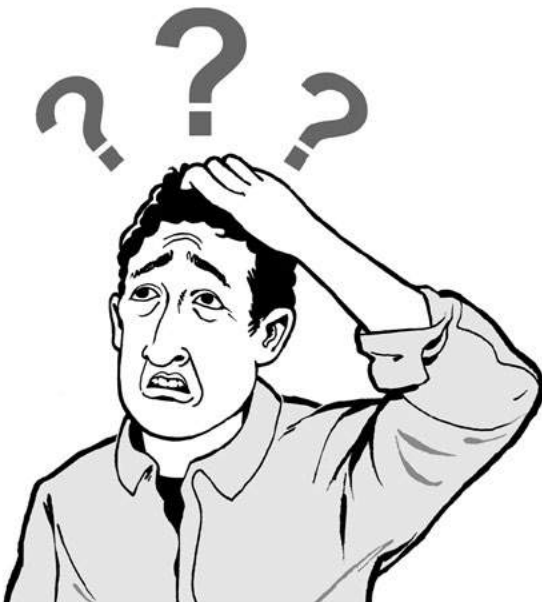
Your body works really hard while you're having a fit.

Afterwards:

- You might need a big rest



- You might have a headache and pains in your body. These should go away after a good rest



- You may not remember anything about the fit



What can make my fits stop happening?

Most people who have fits need to take medicine to help the fits stop. For lots of people the medicine can, after a while, help to stop all the fits.



Is there a medicine that can work for me?

The doctor will try and find an epilepsy medicine that is the right one for you. If that one doesn't seem to work, they might give you a different epilepsy medicine.



If that doesn't work, they may try giving you two epilepsy medicines at the same time.

What makes fits more likely to happen?

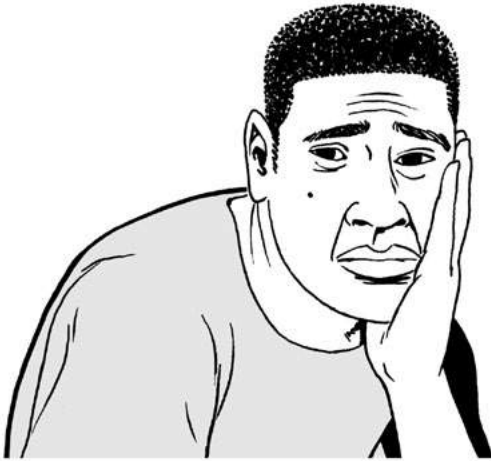
Here are some things that make it more likely you will have a fit:

- Missing your epilepsy medicine





- Getting over-tired



- Getting very worried



- Drinking too much alcohol



Write down in a diary when you have a fit and what epilepsy medicine you are taking. Get help to do this if you need to.



Talk to your doctor or nurse about how you're feeling. This will help you find out if there are particular things that make your fits more likely.



Is there anything I should stop doing because I have epilepsy?

If you are still having fits it's a really good idea for someone with you to know about this. They can help decide what's safe for you.

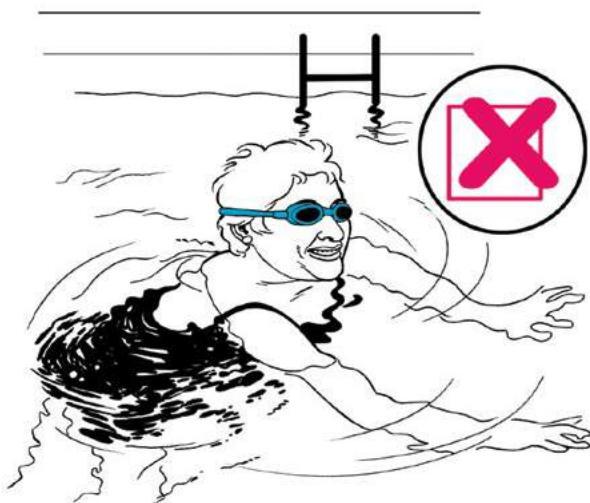
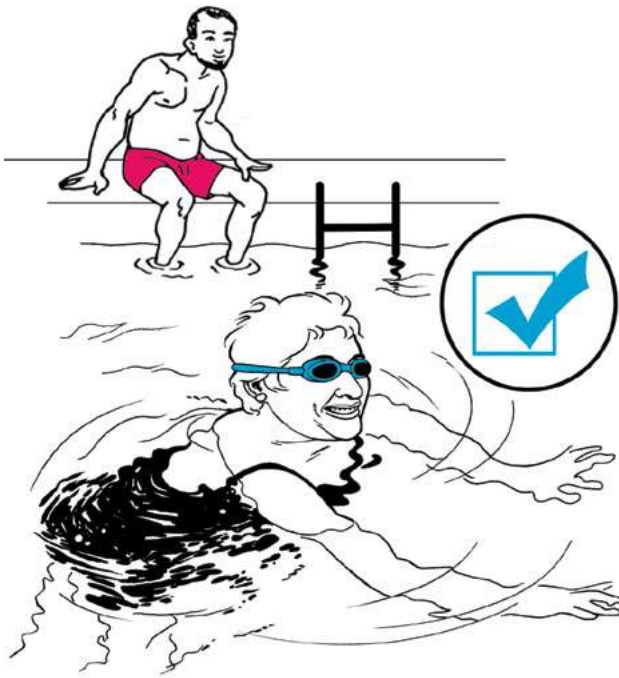
Here are some ways to keep yourself safe if you're still having fits:

Washing



- Have a bath when there is someone nearby

- Don't have a bath when you are alone in the house.



Swimming

- Go swimming when there is someone near you who could help if you had a fit
- Don't go swimming on your own

Other activities

- It's best not to climb up high like on a chair, climbing frame or a ladder



- Only use sharp or dangerous electrical equipment such as a knife or an iron when there is someone nearby.



- It's best not to use sharp or dangerous electrical equipment like a knife or an iron especially without someone nearby



Will people treat me differently because I have epilepsy?

It's good if people with you know about your fits. They should know how to help you if you have a fit. But they shouldn't treat you differently just because you have epilepsy.



An example of this might be if someone said you couldn't join a club because you have epilepsy.



If you think someone is treating you differently because you have epilepsy, and you think it's unfair, there is something you can do. **The Equality Act** is there to help stop this unfairness happening.



What do my family and friends and carers need to do if I have a fit?

We have a whole separate sheet on epilepsy and first aid. It's quite simple. What people do to help you will depend on which type of fit you are having.



Why do some people with learning disabilities have epilepsy?

Sometimes if you have a learning disability your brain works in a different way and you may be more likely to have epilepsy.

Where can I go if I want to find out more about epilepsy?

The Epilepsy Action Helpline:

Freephone 0808 800 5050

The Epilepsy Action website:

www.epilepsy.org.uk

For more information contact:

Epilepsy Action



Epilepsy Action
New Anstey House
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We'd love to know what you think of this leaflet

