



# FACT SHEET

## *Brain Injury & Seizures*

*Do you  
have  
trouble  
with  
seizures  
since  
your  
brain  
injury?*

### What does this mean?

One of the problems that can occur after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) are seizures. Although most people who have a brain injury will never have a seizure, it is good to understand what a seizure is and what to do if you have one. Most seizures happen in the first several days or weeks after a brain injury. Some may occur months or years after the injury. About 70-80% of people who have seizures are helped by medications and can return to most activities. Rarely, seizures can make you much worse or even cause death.

### How might a brain injury lead to seizures?

There are three types of seizures: Early post-traumatic seizures, late post-traumatic seizures, and epilepsy. The cause of the brain injury can help doctors figure out how likely you are to have seizures.

Statistics show:

- ◆ 65% of people with brain injuries caused by bullet wounds have seizures.
- ◆ 20% of people with 'closed head injuries' that cause bleeding between the brain and the skull experience seizures.
- ◆ Over 35% of people who need two or more brain surgeries after a brain injury may experience late post-traumatic seizures.
- ◆ Over 25% of people with bleeding on both sides of the brain, or who have a blood clot that must be removed by surgery, experience late post-traumatic seizures.

### Recommended strategies:

- ◆ Talk to your doctor about medications that are used to control seizures called antiepileptic drugs (AEDs).
- ◆ If seizures continue even after trying medications, your doctor may refer you to a comprehensive Epilepsy Center for more tests and to be seen by special seizure doctors called epileptologists or neurologists specializing in epilepsy.
- ◆ In most states, if you have had a seizure you cannot drive and you must notify the department of motor vehicles (DMV). Usually you won't be able to return to driving for a period of time, or until your seizures have been completely stopped.
- ◆ Always have someone with you if you are in water.
- ◆ Don't climb on ladders, trees, roofs or other tall objects.
- ◆ Let people who eat with you know what to do if you have a seizure and start to choke.
- ◆ Educate yourself and your caregiver(s) on a Seizure Response Plan (visit [www.efa.org](http://www.efa.org) to learn more) to know what can be done to protect yourself from harm.

**Sources:** IU School of Medicine / Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana TBI Model Systems. Further, the information in this FACT SHEET is also based on a consensus of expert opinion of the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Departments of Neuropsychology and Resource Facilitation.

**Disclaimer:** This information is not meant to replace advice from a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatments.

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