



EPILEPSY

& DRIVING

Patient and Family Information

WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that may affect a person in a variety of ways depending on which area of the brain is impacted. Each person's epilepsy is classified by the cause and type of seizure activity.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT DRIVING AND YOUR EPILEPSY?

All drivers need to know how their health conditions may affect their ability to drive safely. While it is not known whether epilepsy increases a person's risk of crashing, it is important for you to be aware of epilepsy's possible impacts on driving. The laws about driving with epilepsy vary by state, so be sure to follow both the recommendations of your doctor and your state's driving laws.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT SEIZURES AND DRIVING?

The chief symptom of epilepsy is seizure activity, which can cause someone to:

- Pass out or lose consciousness
- Have difficulty controlling their muscles
- Have unusual sensory experiences, like hallucinations

Any of these symptoms can cause you to unexpectedly lose control of your vehicle and potentially crash.

It is of particular concern if you do not experience an "aura" or any other warning before a seizure because there is no time to get yourself to safety before losing control. If you do experience "auras," it is critical to discuss your seizure activity with your healthcare provider to learn how to get to safety while driving.

To help prevent seizures, it's important to follow your medical treatment guidelines consistently.

Find your **state's laws on driving with epilepsy.**



WHAT OTHER WAYS COULD EPILEPSY AFFECT YOUR DRIVING?

In addition to seizures, epilepsy may impact your driving in other ways such as:

- Anti-epileptic drugs or other medications may lead to side effects such as aggression, irritability, sedation, paranoia, and/or other issues. These could possibly increase your risk of crashing. However, it's still important to follow your medical treatment guidelines consistently as seizure prevention is of utmost importance.
- Epilepsy can affect your vision by reducing contrast sensitivity and depth perception. These vision issues can affect your ability to perform certain driving tasks, such as identifying lane markings and following other vehicles at a safe distance.
- Memory and attention may also be affected by epilepsy, which can impact your ability to focus on the road and safely interact with other road users.

If you experience any additional symptoms not listed here, talk with your doctor or a local Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist about how they might impact your driving.

HOW CAN YOU BE A SAFER DRIVER?

Even though epilepsy can affect driving performance, there are ways you can develop safer driving skills, including:

- Talk to your doctor about wanting to drive and whether it's a safe choice
- Follow your medical treatment guidelines
- Keep track of your seizure activity and report it to your doctor and the state licensing agency, if necessary
- Review safe driving resources for teens and families, developed by experts at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), at teendriversource.research.chop.edu
- Contact a local Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist who has training in working with individuals to address the following factors as they relate specifically to driving:
 - Seizure activity
 - Side effects from medications
 - Vision issues
 - Memory and attention issues

Find a **Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist.**



Get free **teen driver safety information and downloadable resources.**

