

EPILEPSY

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Epilepsy is a brain disorder characterized by repeated seizures (“fits”), which may take many forms—ranging from the shortest lapse of attention to severe and frequent convulsions.

Causes

- Excessive electrical discharges in a group of brain cells
- Seizures caused by any kind of brain disease (e.g., infection, injury, vascular tumor, congenital and degenerative diseases)
- Imbalance of the chemical neurotransmitter in the brain
- Some provocative factors in some patients, like photic stimulation (disco lights, television, computers, etc.)
- Over breathing
- Over hydration
- Loss of sleep
- Emotional and physical stress

Signs and Symptoms

- Temporary symptoms:
 - Loss of awareness/consciousness
 - Disturbances of movement
 - Sensation (including vision, hearing and taste)
 - Mood and mental function
- More physical problems, such as fractures and bruising
- Higher rates of other diseases or psychosocial issues and conditions, like anxiety and depression

Attacks may vary in frequency from less than one per year to several per day.



Treatment

About 70% of newly diagnosed cases can be successfully treated with an anti-epileptic medication that is taken without interruption.

Prevention

Avoid head trauma and birth anoxia (inadequate levels of oxygen in the tissues). Most epileptic syndromes, however, cannot be prevented.