
From: Epilepsy South Africa [mailto:info@epilepsy.org.za]
Sent: 15 June 2009 08:46
To: funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za
Subject: South Africa National Epilepsy Week, Day 1 - Preview



June 2009

Dear Advocate for Epilepsy

Today is the first day of South Africa National Epilepsy Week. We will be celebrating this time by sharing information to the different aspects of the lives of people with epilepsy. Each day will be accompanied by a short video to be viewed on you tube. Something that can easily be sent to friends and colleagues. Here is the link to today's video
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJgE0hcv9xk>.

Let's talk Epilepsy!

June E-news Contents:

- [South Africa National Epilepsy Week Day 1: "People with epilepsy and society in general have the right to correct information":](#)

South Africa National Epilepsy Week Day 1: "People with epilepsy and society in general have the right to correct information":

Although epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions, it is also one of the most misunderstood. This delays dealing with facts that can present a better quality of life for the person with epilepsy, their families and those around them.

People like to remain in a comfort zone where they believe things to be under control. Seemingly our "mysterious" condition (epilepsy) falls outside this category. These global misunderstandings should be easy to correct, but remain barriers faced by people with

epilepsy.

Some of these misunderstandings include:

- People with epilepsy can't do certain things like sport, or excel at other things that contain physical or even mental work.
- People with epilepsy are not smart.
- People with epilepsy should be treated differently from able-bodied people.
- People have epilepsy because someone did something wrong.

Doctors, neurologists and social workers specializing in epilepsy are quite capable to explain the disorder to the person with epilepsy and others around him/her. Such understanding should effectively assist the person with epilepsy to live a full life making use of different treatments to control the condition. However, society continues erecting barriers for the person with epilepsy.

While it is true that lives are altered by a diagnosis of epilepsy, there are numerous people describing how they have learnt to cope with the condition.

As part of our celebration of National Epilepsy Week Epilepsy SA offers a short explanation of epilepsy:

- Epilepsy is a disorder and not a disease, illness, psychiatric disorder or a mental illness.
- It is not contagious.
- It is characterized by unusual electrical activity in the brain. The brain consists of millions of nerve cells called neurons. Billions of electrical messages are passed on or "fired" between these cells, controlling our whole body, including what we think, feel, do and see, as well as muscle movement.
- Epilepsy is the tendency to have seizures caused by a temporary change in the way the brain cells (neurons) work. Sometimes a disturbance in the brain chemistry causes messages to get "scrambled". When this happens the neurons fire off faster than usual or in bursts or too many neurons are triggered and fire off at the same time. This disturbed activity, which is like a small "electrical storm" in the brain, triggers seizures.
- While there can be many different underlying causes, such as head injury, birth injury, hemorrhage, strokes and tumors, in more than 50 % of cases the underlying cause of epilepsy is unknown.

The unpredictability of seizures adds to the mystery of epilepsy. However, understanding what happens during a seizure and knowing what to do when someone has a seizure removes the mystery and empowers everyone affected.

Stay with us for the rest of the week as we share more information on the rights of people with epilepsy, and invite your friends to join in the journey to discovery.

What to do during a seizure

DO...

- Remain calm and note the time
- Clear a space around the person and prevent others from crowding around
- Loosen tight clothing / neckwear and remove spectacles.
- Cushion the head to prevent injury
- Put the person into the shock recovery position (i.e. roll the person onto his/her side with the top leg bent and the bottom arm slightly extended)
- Wipe away any excess saliva to facilitate breathing
- Reassure and assist the person until he/she has recovered or become re-orientated

- Allow the person to rest or sleep is necessary covering him/her with a blanket.
- Note the duration of the seizure and the time it took place. Provide this information to the person who had the seizure after he/she has recovered fully. This will help him/her to record the information in his/her seizure diary.

DO NOT...

- Restrict or restrain the person's movements.
- Move the person unless he/she might hurt him/herself or is in immediate danger (i.e. in a busy road)
- Put anything between the person's teeth or in the person's mouth
- Give anything to eat or drink during the seizure
- Give extra anti-convulsants, unless stipulated to do so by a neurologist
- Call a doctor or an ambulance unless the person has injured him/herself badly or when the seizure lasts longer than 6 minutes or the person has repeated seizures without recovering between seizures!

OUR NATIONAL CONTACT NUMBER 0860 374 537

[\[back to top\]](#)

Visit our website or to contact any of our Branches or National Office.

Website: www.epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA – National Office, Cape Town

PO Box 73
OBSERVATORY
7935
Tel: (021) 447-3014
info@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA
South Cape/Karoo

PO Box 107
KNYSNA
6570
Tel: (044) 382-2155
southcape@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA
Western Cape

PO Box 24573,
LANDSDOWNE,
7779
Tel: (021) 703-9420
wcape@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA
Mpumalanga / Limpopo

PO Box 55,
DULLSTROOM,
1110
Tel: (013) 254-0161/2/3
mpumalanga@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA
Gauteng Branch
Regional office

PO Box 1070
SPRINGS
1560
Tel: (011) 816-2040/57
gauteng@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA Free
State & North West
Branch

PO Box 167
PARYS
9585
Tel: (056) 811-5959
freestate@epilepsy.org.za

EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA
Kwa Zulu Natal Midlands
Branch

PO Box 2165
PIETERMARITZBURG
3200
Tel: (033) 394-1041/8
kzn@epilepsy.org.za

PLEASE CONTACT 0860 EPILEPSY (0860 374537)

TO GET IN CONTACT WITH YOUR CLOSEST BRANCH OF EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA

This is the electronic newsletter of Epilepsy South Africa, compiled by the National Office.

[Visit our Website](#)

[Unsubscribe from our newsletter](#)