
First Evaluation for Seizures: A Checklist

Instructions: Use this checklist to see if you (or your loved one) are getting some of the basic care and information you will need when being evaluated for seizures and epilepsy. This list does not include everything that people with epilepsy need, but offers a starting point for general care of their epilepsy. We hope this checklist will help you start looking at your epilepsy care and help you talk with your doctor.

When you were first evaluated for seizures, did you have...

- A detailed discussion of your seizure history
- A review of other conditions that could cause or affect seizures
- A physical examination to rule out other causes of symptoms or medical problems that could affect seizures
- A detailed neurological examination to look for other neurological problems or findings that may help tell more about the type or location of seizures
- Blood and urine tests to look for medical problems that may affect seizures or occur as a result of a seizure

When you were first evaluated for seizures or diagnosed with epilepsy, if there was no obvious cause found, were you given...

- An EEG (also called an electroencephalogram) to look at the brain waves for possible seizure activity or markers of seizures
- A brain scan, usually an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) that looks at the structure of the brain for problems that may cause seizures or tell where they come from.
- A referral to an epilepsy center or specialist

When you were first evaluated for seizures or diagnosed with epilepsy, were you given information on...

- Driving restrictions
- Safety including what to do if a seizure occurred and general safety instructions
- How to prevent injury, such as any equipment or aids that may help you stay safe

If your first seizure didn't have any obvious cause, but other tests were of concern* or if you or your caregivers or family felt the risk of more seizures was worth trying a medicine for seizures, did your doctor ...

**(For example other neurological problems were found on an examination, an EEG showed activity that could be related to seizure activity, or a brain scan showed a structural change in the brain)*

- Talk about how seizure medicines may help
- Talk about side effects or other risks of taking seizure medicine
- Offer or suggest that you take seizure medicine
- Describe if seizure medicine wasn't needed and why

After you were diagnosed with epilepsy, did your doctor..

- Talk about the type of seizures you have
- Talk about what the diagnosis of epilepsy means
- Talk about how seizure medicines may help
- Explain possible side effects of seizure medicine
- Offer or suggest that you take seizure medicine
- Stress the importance of taking seizure medicine as prescribed and how to take them
- Explain how lifestyle or other factors may affect seizure control and what to do
- Ask whether you use contraception
- Explain how seizure medicines may affect some forms of contraception and what to do
- Ask if you were planning on having children
- Talk about how seizures and seizure medicines may or may not affect having children

If you are over age 60 and started having seizures, did your doctor...

- Talk to you about the benefits and risks of starting seizure medicine after the first seizure or describe why seizure medicine may not be needed
- Talk about which seizure medicines may be most helpful for you
- Tell you which seizure medicines may affect other medicines taken for other reasons
- First recommend that you try a medicine that does not interfere with other medicines

If you were started on seizure medicine after being diagnosed with seizures/epilepsy, did the doctor...

- Begin you on one medicine
 - Talk to you about other medicines you take
 - Talk about ways to lessen the chance that the drugs would affect each other
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Checklist items were adapted from a research study that developed quality indicators for epilepsy. These indicators are a way to tell if doctors or other health care providers are providing basic quality care to people with epilepsy and seizures. For more information:

http://my.epilepsy.com/treatment/receiving_quality_care

http://professionals.epilepsy.com/page/care_quality_measures.html

[Pugh MJ, Berlowitz DR, Montouris G, et al. What constitutes high quality of care for adults with epilepsy? *Neurology* 2007;69:2020-2027. \(\[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17928576?ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum\]\(http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17928576?ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum\)\)](#)