

Understanding Side Effects of Anti-Seizure Medicine



Anti-seizure medicines are important to control your seizures and improve your health, but sometimes people react differently to these medicines or have side effects.

What is a side effect?

Side effects are unwanted reactions to a medicine. Every anti-seizure medicine might cause side effects, even if you take the medicine the right way. The chance of having side effects varies from person to person.



What causes side effects?

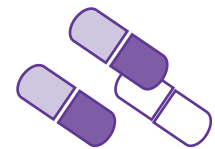
- Many things can be the cause of side effects
- Some side effects are mild and some are more serious
- Your age, sex, and other health problems may make it more or less likely you will have a side effect
- How a medicine works, how much medicine you take and when you take medicine can also make side effects more likely for some people
- Sometimes other medicines you take can make side effects happen



When are side effects most likely to happen?

Side effects usually occur when:

- You first start taking a medicine (first 3 months)
- The amount of medicine you take is changed



What are common side effects and what should I know?

The most common side effects:

- Problems with thinking and memory
- Trouble with coordination and balance
- Mood changes
- Upset stomach
- Being tired



These can occur with any seizure medicine, but often are mild and get better with time. Most people do not have any major side effects. If you have side effects that are hard to live with each day, you should talk to your provider as soon as possible.

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How can your doctor/nurse help you decrease side effects of anti-seizure medicine?

You can work with your doctor/nurse to minimize side effects. Because some side effects are temporary (only last a short time) or mild, your provider might want you to keep taking the medicine for a little longer to see if they get better. If your side effects last longer or affect your daily life, your provider might give you a smaller dose or a different medicine. Long-term side effects that affect your quality of life are not acceptable.

Never stop your medicine or change the amount you take on your own. This can cause you to have more seizures or more severe seizures. Most anti-seizure medicines don't work well if you skip a dose or take too low a dose. Call your doctor/nurse and ask for help.

Sometimes, you might need to get a second opinion or change your doctor to discuss other treatment options.

