



## ATTEND UPCOMING EPILEPSY FOUNDATION WEBINARS AND FACEBOOK LIVE EVENTS

Like the Epilepsy Foundation's: [Facebook page](#) to keep informed about these upcoming events:

Webinar, November 6  
**Neurostimulation Devices**

Facebook Live, November 14  
**Epilepsy, A Family's Journey with Phil Gattone**

Facebook Live, December 5  
**Infantile Spasms and Finding the Right Care**

Facebook Live, December 19  
**Coping with Holiday Stress**

## YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH: HOLIDAY BLUES

The holiday season is a busy time of the year and can be stressful. We have so many things to do and buy. Stores are crowded; lines are longer; and there is more traffic. Not everyone shares in the celebration and joy associated with the holidays. Many people feel stressed and unhappy from the demands of shopping for gifts, spending large amounts of money, attending parties and family gatherings, and entertaining house guests.

It is not uncommon to react to these stresses with excessive drinking and eating, difficulty sleeping, and physical complaints. The holiday blues can be a common result. If you get the blues during the holidays, you are not alone.

Pay attention to your unique situation. How and what you pay attention to is important. Generally, we tend to focus on the bad things in life, dwell on negative thoughts, and engage in distorted thinking. Some negative thoughts are outside our control to fix. Look beyond bad thoughts and focus on what you are reacting to—things you can control, your reaction to specific events. Taking this approach is vital to understanding your emotions and developing the tools necessary to resolve bad feelings.

### What causes holiday blues?

Often, it is helpful to look at some of the causes of holiday blues and what to do when symptoms show up. Here are some key causes for holiday blues:

- Fear of disappointing others
- Expecting to improve relationships
- Reactions to anniversaries
- Bad memories

## WEBINAR FOR EMPLOYERS

### Providing Accommodations for Job Seekers Living with Epilepsy

Thursday, November 15, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. ET

Are you an employer looking to learn more about epilepsy? Do you employ a caregiver or spouse of someone living with epilepsy?

Join the Epilepsy Foundation and Getting Hired, Inc. for a webinar to learn about how employers can provide accommodations for people living with epilepsy, their caregivers, and spouses. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 3.4 million people have epilepsy nationwide, which is why it is important employers know the spectrum of epilepsy and how to support this population in the workplace.

This webinar is geared toward employers (hiring managers and recruiters) to learn more about epilepsy in the workplace. However, all are welcome to register and participate.

**Register Here** - <http://bit.ly/2PNCbKA>

- Recurrent depression with seasonal pattern, formerly known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

### What can you do for holiday blues?

Here are some strategies to help you combat the holiday blues:

- Look for sources of support
- Give yourself special care
- Set limits and priorities
- Volunteer your time
- Get some exercise

### Dealing with the post-holiday blues

For some people, holiday blues continue into the new year,



often caused by residual feelings of disappointment or exhaustion from the holidays. Starting a new year and reflecting on the holidays can also cause anxiety.

### More than just holiday blues?

If your sad feelings continue for more than a few weeks, you may have clinical depression. The following symptoms may indicate more severe depression:

- changes in appetite
- changes in sleep patterns
- having less energy
- less interest in daily activities
- difficulty concentrating
- overall feeling of helplessness and hopelessness

Clinical depression requires professional treatment. If you are concerned that a friend or family member may be suffering from more than just holiday blues, encourage them to seek professional treatment. If you or your loved one has thoughts of worthlessness or suicide, seek help from a qualified mental health professional as soon as possible.

Overall, this is not an easy time of the year, be kind and patient with yourself. Work to problem solve situations and take comfort in knowing holiday blues are temporary. Happy Holidays!

### For more information:

Wellness Institute on Emotional Health: <https://tinyurl.com/ycly9qd9>

Wellness Institute on Depression: <https://tinyurl.com/y74rc7ld>

American Counseling Association: [counseling.org](https://counseling.org)

American Psychological Association: [apa.org](https://apa.org)

National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI): [nami.org](https://nami.org)

American Mental Health Counselors Association: [amhca.org](https://amhca.org)

National Mental Health Association: [nmha.org](https://nmha.org)

## PARTICIPATE IN FITNESS AND FUNDRAISING

**Athletes vs Epilepsy** is a nationwide program for athletes, coaches, volunteers and fans. This program raises awareness and funds to support the Epilepsy Foundation's work to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives. Anyone can help with this effort that combines fundraising and physical activity. Here's Noah:

My name is Noah, and I'm 11 years old. I had my first seizure out of the blue this past Christmas morning. After that, I had an EEG which was abnormal and was started on medication. After another ER visit, an MRI, and some time to adjust medication, I'm doing well and have been seizure-free. Being diagnosed with epilepsy changed my life. I had a hard time understanding the seizure and my epilepsy, but I have learned I am not alone.



I decided to run with Athletes vs Epilepsy because epilepsy has become a big part of my life. I am running an 8-kilometer race and raising funds to make a difference in the lives of people, like me, living with epilepsy. I have been blessed that my epilepsy has responded so well to my medication, but other people are not as lucky and there needs to be more research about medications and treatment.

Visit Noah's fundraising page to read his story: <http://bit.ly/AvEnoah>

Interested in joining #AthletesVsEpilepsy? Visit [athletesvsepilepsy.com](http://athletesvsepilepsy.com)

## ON NUTRITION: EATING HEALTHY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is here. Decorations and music are already flooding the stores. Parties are being planned. Tasty treats are around every corner. The excitement and energy are building. Holidays present a time of love and laughter with family and friends. But, they also can present endless challenges to our ability to make good, healthy decisions. Just because the holidays have potential for unhealthy opportunities, doesn't mean you have to give in to an extra 5-pound gain, heartburn, or the sleepless nights. Below are some tips for making it through the holiday parties and temptations unscathed.

- 1. Set Yourself Up for Success:** When you are going to a party, bring a healthy dish to ensure you will have a nutritious option for yourself and that you can share with others.
- 2. Plan Ahead:** Being hungry can make it harder to make good food choices. Before going to parties, have a healthy snack.
- 3. Be the Host:** When you are hosting a party, you have better control of what is served.
- 4. Allowance:** Part of the holidays is allowing yourself to indulge in seasonal treats. Give yourself that gift. Food can be joyful, cultural, and memorable.
- 5. Pay Attention:** When you allow yourself to partake, be aware of portion sizes. Maybe just have a taste rather than the full piece of pie. Or allow one treat a week. Find a system that works for you to control your indulgence.

## ON WELLNESS: EPILEPSY WITH OTHER DISABILITIES

Do you or your loved one have other disabilities in addition to epilepsy? You may wonder how wellness pertains to you when you're focused on dealing with your day-to-day problems.

Epilepsy is not just one disease – it's a family of diseases.

- For many people, seizures may be the main problem and are easily controlled. The epilepsy may not affect their general health or daily activity very much. Or any problems can be easily managed.
- For others, epilepsy can create havoc on a person's health and daily activities.

### How can wellness help me cope with epilepsy?

Wellness focuses on one's physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Sometimes it's used to describe a state of good health. However, it's more realistic and practical to describe wellness as *aiming for the best possible state of health*. This is particularly true when you have more than one disability. Even though your efforts may not lead to good health, you can still achieve improved health. For example, wellness efforts (regardless of the cause of the problems) may target any or all the following:

- How to control seizures better
- How to prevent falls and injuries and stay safe in any situation

## GET A FLU SHOT

People with epilepsy should pay attention to their general health, not just their seizures. Talk to your doctor or nurse about the flu, whether you should get the flu shot and which one. Take care of yourself too! If you get sick and notice a change in your seizures or have trouble taking your seizure medicines, talk to your epilepsy team.

Learn more about flu prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu>.

## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

- Do you have a question about wellness and epilepsy?
- Want to share what you do to keep yourself healthy or happy?
- Do you have a great trick for managing your stress?

We'd love to share your questions, ideas, or success stories in an upcoming issue of our newsletter. Email us at [wellness@efa.org](mailto:wellness@efa.org). Photos would be great, too.

*Live Well* is a bimonthly publication of the Epilepsy Foundation Wellness Institute.

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For more information  
[epilepsy.com/wellness](http://epilepsy.com/wellness)  
[wellness@efa.org](mailto:wellness@efa.org)

- How to prevent or cope with cognitive problems (thinking, memory, attention, etc.)
- How to walk and be as independent as possible, with or without help
- How to prevent complications from not being able to walk and move around well
- How to manage hormonal problems
- How to manage behavioral changes that affect daily life
- How to prevent or treat sleep disorders and improve your sleep habits
- How to manage weight and improve diet
- How to find and keep a job
- How and when to disclose to employers, friends, or family
- How to cope with changes in feelings and behavior

## How can these problems be addressed?

Getting help for these problems depends on recognizing them early and getting a full picture of how they affect you or your loved one. With children, problems are usually recognized first by parents and pediatricians. Help is more readily available through early intervention and school resources. For adults, resources may be harder to find, and medical care may be more fragmented. Some primary care providers may not be comfortable managing a person with multiple problems or disabilities. Or they don't have the right resources or professionals to help.

## How do I improve my wellness when I'm faced with multiple disabilities?

Your role (as a person with epilepsy, family or friend, caregiver) will be to take a broad, holistic look at your health.

- Ask a nurse or other health care professional to do a functional assessment—how are your epilepsy and other problems affecting you? Then look at what's contributing to the problems and set a plan with your health care team.
- Talk to your primary care and epilepsy team and make sure your treatment plan includes ways to address these issues.
- Don't get discouraged if your medical team doesn't have all the answers. Look to community agencies that are experts in that area.
- Contact the Epilepsy Foundation for help.

## How can the Epilepsy Foundation help?

The Epilepsy Foundation network is here to help. Call our 24/7 Helpline (1-800-332-1000) to connect with a local Epilepsy Foundation and other resources. Local Epilepsy Foundations may provide case management for epilepsy-related health concerns, emotional health, educational concerns, employment help, or living resources.

The Wellness Institute and [epilepsy.com](http://epilepsy.com) will be focusing on recognizing and adapting wellness approaches for everyone. Please send your questions or areas you'd like to learn more about to [wellness@efa.org](mailto:wellness@efa.org).