

Causes And Triggers Of Epilepsy.

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In epilepsy, seizures are caused by temporary disturbances in the signals in the brain. But having a seizure may also be caused by reasons other than epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that affects approximately one percent of the population, though some individuals may experience seizures only every three to five years. This number may be higher as many individuals remain undiagnosed due to the stigma, misinformation and discrimination associated with epilepsy. Epilepsy can be a frightening and very serious disorder that can greatly impact the lives of individuals affected as well as their families.

Symptoms: What Is a Seizure?

Epilepsy is primarily characterized by chronic seizures or convulsions whose nature and intensity vary from person to person.

An epileptic seizure takes place when the brain functions abnormally for a brief period causing a change in movement, attention and awareness. This "misfiring" of the nerves may cause losing consciousness for short periods of time, temporary paralysis, losing control of muscles, violent jerking and spasms of the entire body or partial body. A seizure may also be a sudden stillness and a vacant stare, confusion or an emotional outburst.

There are several types of seizures; some last a few seconds or a few minutes and others occur only during certain sleep phases. It is also possible for a person with epilepsy to have more than one type of seizure. A general convulsion which involves the entire body is termed a *grand mal* fit, while a seizure that occurs with little or no movement is referred to as a *petit mal* fit, though these terms are not medical descriptions.

In Epileptics Seizures Can be Triggered by Strong Emotions, Illness, Stress, Exhaustion

Seizures can cause exhaustion, weakness and chronic fatigue, particularly if they usually occur at night, disrupting sleep patterns. Other dangers to epileptics include harming oneself due to falling, biting, choking or hitting hard objects during a seizure. Some epileptics experience a warning sign before a seizure occurs and ensure that they are in a safe environment. This feeling is called an aura and may involve a specific feeling, smell or visual effect.

Seizures can be triggered or worsened by certain events including:

- stress and anxiety
- heat or high humidity
- strong emotions such as fear, anger and worry
- poor nutrition or missing meals
- missed medication
- flickering, bright or flashing lights
- illness, fever and allergies
- lack of sleep or poor quality sleep

It is important to understand that having a seizure does not mean that a person has epilepsy. Infections, high fevers, injuries and some disorders can cause isolated seizures. In epileptics seizures are repeat and chronic, even if spaced years apart and they continue to occur for unknown reasons.

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Reference:

- Guyton and Hall Textbook of Medical Physiology Eleventh Edition