

# Epilepsy in Women and Pregnancy

## What is it?

If you have epilepsy and want to fall pregnant, there are some issues you need to be aware of.

Having epilepsy might make it harder for you to conceive. You may need to change your medications and learn how to manage your seizures. There is a small chance that seizures may affect the health of your baby, but most women with epilepsy go on to have healthy babies.

Your GP will help you to control your seizures and manage your health to reduce the risks.

## What will my GP do now?

If you don't want to get pregnant now, your GP can give you safe options for birth control. You can also talk to your GP about future planning.

If you want to get pregnant soon, your GP may talk to you about:

- Epilepsy and pregnancy – including risks and general advice
- Medications – and whether to change or reduce them
- Safe driving – if you have stopped your medication
- Labour and delivery – as well as breastfeeding and safety tips

If you're already pregnant, your GP may:

- Help you manage your medication and seizures
- Suggest a folic acid supplement
- Arrange prenatal tests
- Refer you to a neurologist or obstetrician with experience in epilepsy and pregnancy.

## What will my GP do in the future?

While your GP may not be your primary carer, they will continue to support you and offer resources and advice. You can also contact your GP if you have questions about pregnancy, breastfeeding and medications.

## What can I do?

It's normal to feel worried about how epilepsy will impact your pregnancy. Remember, most women with epilepsy go on to have healthy babies.

Continue to live a healthy, active lifestyle. Make sure you know about the risks and safety steps. Ask your GP questions, and take your medications.

Take the time to learn about caring for your baby safely. Keep a list of questions to ask your GP between check-ups.

## When should I call an ambulance?



Phone Triple 000 immediately if there have been more than two seizures in 24 hours, a grand mal seizure, or if a seizure resulted in fall and potential trauma.

## What supports are available?

### Non-urgent antenatal care referrals

- **Bankstown Hospital Antenatal Clinic:** Phone **9722 8333**
- **Fairfield Hospital Antenatal Clinic:** Phone **9616 8506**
- **Bowral and District Hospital Antenatal Clinic:** Phone **4861 0224**
- **Liverpool Hospital Antenatal Clinic:** Phone **8738 4197**
- **Campbelltown and Camden Hospital Antenatal Clinic:** Phone **4634 4963**

### Early Pregnancy Assessment Service

The service offers support for women who are less than 20 weeks pregnant and are experiencing lower pain or bleeding.

- **Bankstown Hospital** – Outpatients Department Level 2: Phone **9722 8333**
- **Liverpool Hospital** – Level 1, Caroline Chisolm Building (opposite maternity): Phone **8738 5632**
- **Campbelltown Hospital** – Reception C, Outpatients (Building F): Phone **4364 4963**



## What questions could I ask my doctor?

*Is it safe to get pregnant?*

*Does epilepsy make it harder to get pregnant?*

*Does pregnancy increase the risk of seizures?*

*Is there an increased risk of seizure during labour?*

*Are epilepsy medications risky for my baby?*

*Should I stop taking my medications?*

*Is my baby at risk of birth defects?*

*Is breastfeeding safe?*



## Where can I learn more?

If you'd like to learn more about epilepsy and pregnancy, the following resources can help:

- **Better Health Channel:** [betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
  - [Epilepsy](#)
  - [Epilepsy first aid and safety](#)
  - [Epilepsy lifestyle issues](#)
- **Epilepsy Action Australia** – women's issues: [epilepsy.org.au](http://epilepsy.org.au)