

Epilepsy and pregnancy

What is it?

It is important to plan for a healthy pregnancy if you have epilepsy. Most women with epilepsy will have a good pregnancy and give birth to a healthy baby. Although, there are some risks. Having epilepsy may make it harder to get pregnant. Pregnancy may affect your seizures or the effectiveness of your medication.

It is important to talk to your GP. They will help you to control your seizures and manage your health to reduce the risk during your pregnancy.

What will my GP do now?

If you don't want to get pregnant

Your GP will give you safe options for birth control. You can also talk to your GP about planning for the future.

If you are planning a pregnancy

If you are planning to get pregnant soon, your GP will talk to you about:

- Risks and general advice for your pregnancy
- Your medication
- Safe driving
- Labour, delivery and breastfeeding safety

If you are already pregnant

If you are already pregnant, your GP will talk to you about:

- Managing your seizures
- Supplements you can take to help your pregnancy
- Tests you should do to keep your baby safe
- Seeing a neurologist or obstetrician with experience in epilepsy and pregnancy

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will continue to support you. Contact your GP at any time if you would like to talk about anything more.

What can I do?

It is important to manage your health for you and your baby. Stay active, eat healthy foods and take your medication as prescribed.

See your GP as soon as possible if you have an unplanned pregnancy. If you are thinking about becoming pregnant, talk with your neurologist and your GP before you become pregnant. They will let you know what to expect. They will also tell you any changes to make to have a safe and healthy pregnancy.

If you are already pregnant and your symptoms change, talk to your neurologist.

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.

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What supports are available?

National Epilepsy Support Service (NESS)

The NESS offers free support and information for people living with epilepsy in Australia.

Phone **1300 761 487** Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm.

SWSLHD Antenatal Clinics

Visit the Health Resource Directory website to find contact details of an Antenatal Clinic close to you. To access this service, you will need a referral from your GP.

SWSLHD Early Pregnancy Assessment Services (EPAS)

Visit the Health Resource Directory website to find contact details of an EPAS close to you. To access this service, you will need a referral from your GP.



What questions could I ask my doctor?

- Is it safe for me to get pregnant?*
- Should I stop taking my medication?*
- Will pregnancy increase my risk of seizures?*
- Is breastfeeding safe?*
- Will my baby be affected?*
- How can I plan for a safe pregnancy?*



Where can I learn more?

- **Epilepsy Action Australia** - Epilepsy and pregnancy: epilepsy.org.au
- **Epilepsy Smart Australia** - Planning for pregnancy with epilepsy: epilepsysmart.org.au
- **Epilepsy Foundation** - Pregnancy planning: epilepsyfoundation.org.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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