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epilepsy and fertility

Fertility

There is evidence available that women with epilepsy generally have fewer children than other women. Sometimes women with epilepsy, as a possible result of side effects of some antiepileptic drugs, have a menstrual irregularity called Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) which is treatable but does make becoming pregnant more difficult. It is in fact a common condition which affects many women who have never had an epileptic seizure in their lives. There is some doubt, therefore, that there is a connection between epilepsy and PCOS but nevertheless those who are experiencing difficulty in conceiving should discuss the possibility of PCOS being the root cause of the problem.

Pre conceptual genetic counselling

Those women who are planning a pregnancy, and particularly those who have generalized seizures without a known cause or whose family members have a history of epilepsy, should seek advice about the chances of their children inheriting the condition.

The evidence available indicates that the risk of a child born of two parents having a generalized epilepsy of no known cause is increased from being 5-20% when only one parent has the condition to over 20% when both parents are affected. The risks are higher when there are many members of a family who have epilepsy