



## epilepsy - triggers

You should be aware that certain situations can increase your seizure frequency. These are outlined below.

### **Lack of compliance**

Neglecting to take your medication as and when directed is a recipe for disaster. It is vitally important that you do not attempt to vary dosage or withdraw medication of your own accord. The prescribing of antiepileptic medicine is an exact science and should be left to experts.

### **Feverish illness**

A rapid rise in body temperature due to some illness can provoke seizures in children.

### **Tiredness**

It is a well known fact that sleep deprivation can provoke seizures so it is important that you avoid long periods of sleeplessness and that you do try to maintain a regular sleep pattern.

### **Alcohol**

Excessive drinking leads to an increase in seizure pattern because the effectiveness of antiepileptic drugs can be impaired. There is no evidence to suggest that the occasional social drink is in any way harmful.

### **Restricted activity and idleness**

Always try to keep your mind busy by following worthwhile pursuits. The regularity of seizures is inclined to increase when the mind is unoccupied.

### **Emotional stress**

Stressful situations encountered in everyday living can provoke seizures. Areas of concern can include such things as a breakdown in personal relationships, financial problems or difficulties in the workplace. If life starts getting on top of you for any reason, resulting in an increase in the number of seizures, you are strongly advised to seek professional counselling services.

### **Photosensitivity**

Seizures can be provoked in a small number of people by flickering light. If your seizures are provoked by watching television the following simple precautions can be taken:

- The set should always be viewed in a well lit room, from a distance of at least 2 metres, with a small lamp placed on the set.
- Avoid approaching the set and so use a remote control unit to switch channels. If you do not have a remote control unit, cover one eye as you approach the screen to switch channels or adjust picture controls.

Flashing lights on the dance floor may cause a problem. If this is the case, the only real solution is to avoid clubs which use flashing lights.

If you use a visual display unit (VDU) and are photosensitive there are some simple steps to take in order to reduce the effects of light stimulus.

- Sit at a slight angle to the screen.
- After working at the VDU for 15 minutes take a 5 minute break.
- Covering one eye temporarily or permanently does cut down the effect of flicker but can weaken eyesight. Seek advice from an eye specialist before embarking on this type of action.
- Use a special clip-on screen cover to reduce the flicker.