

# The Traveller's Handbook

## for people with epilepsy



Produced as a service to epilepsy



# FIRST AID INSTRUCTIONS



## What you should do if I have a seizure with convulsions

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- Protect my head.
- Do not restrain my movements unless I am in immediate danger.
- Do not put anything in my mouth, especially your fingers.
- Once it is over speak to me and put me on my side so that I can breathe easier.
- Let me rest and reassure me when the seizure is over.

Please note

It is not usually necessary to call for medical attention unless the seizure lasts longer than is usual for me, or if I have one seizure with convulsions after another.

## If I have a seizure without convulsions

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- Do not restrain me unless I am in immediate danger.
- Reassure me during the period of confusion that may follow my seizure.
- Stay with me until I am fully aware and able to talk to you.

**Thank you for your help**

# MEDICATION



- Be sure to continue taking your medication at regular intervals. Check the time difference at your destination before you travel and adjust your medication time gradually to suit. Talk to your doctor before you travel, if you are unsure.
- Carry your prescription medicine and your doctor's letter with details of your condition in your hand luggage. Keep all medication in the original packaging. Check out any restrictions on the amount of medication that you can carry, before you travel.
- Carry a doctor's prescription with you so that you can replace your medication while travelling. In certain countries, you may need a local doctor's prescription, so know the generic name of your drug.

You can check this on the ILAE website,  
[www.ilae-epilepsy.org/Visitors/Centre/AEDs](http://www.ilae-epilepsy.org/Visitors/Centre/AEDs)

- If you need to have vaccinations for your destination, ask your doctor if they will affect your medication or your epilepsy.
- Avoid too much alcohol and too little sleep.



# GENERAL ADVICE



## Tips for travelling

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- Check on current security regulations/restrictions for each airport/port through which you will travel. These can change regularly.
- Carry sufficient medication in your hand luggage for the duration of your outbound and inbound journeys.
- Try to ensure that your sleep pattern is not disrupted before or during a long journey.
- If you require any special travel facilities (e.g. dietary, transport), be sure to arrange this well in advance with the travel company/airline



## Drinking

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- While trying to avoid dehydration on a holiday, especially if you are in a hot climate, remember that too much liquid can cause seizures.
- Alcohol can interfere with anti-epilepsy drugs. Avoid drinking to excess and remember that when on holiday, the heat can increase the effect of alcohol.



## Eating

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- Try to eat regularly as low blood sugar can cause seizures. Bring snacks with you if you are travelling at irregular hours or for a long period.



## Sleeping

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- Travelling abroad can often disrupt sleep patterns. Try to maintain the normal number of hours that you normally sleep.

## Getting around

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- Take the same precautions abroad as you do at home.

Cycling - helmets should be worn and very busy roads avoided.

Walking - avoid walking close to the outside edge of pavements and take care near water. Cross the road at a marked crossing or use the subway.

Public Transport - keep away from the edge of the station platform, stand clear of any doors and avoid travelling upstairs on a bus



## Accommodation

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- Before booking accommodation, check that it meets all your personal safety requirements. For example, ground floor/wheelchair accessible if necessary; an elevator to all upper floors; a shower in the bathroom.

## Nightlife

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- Nightclubs and some bars may be a risk if you have photosensitive epilepsy. If this is the case, they are best avoided.

## Sport

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- Sport involving water, such as swimming or fishing, can be safely enjoyed as long as you are with a friend or relative who can assist in the case of an emergency. Wear protective headgear if you are cycling or horse riding. Be sure to check that you are covered by your insurance before taking part in any risk sport!



## Health

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- Certain illnesses will affect your medication including infections and diarrhoea. You should seek medical attention if you suffer from either of these conditions for more than 24 hours.

## Insurance

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- Bring details of your medical insurance with you when travelling. EU citizens should also carry their European Health Insurance Card (see EU website for details). Keep receipts and record of any medical expenses you may have while travelling, as insurance claims will require them.

## Driving

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- If you intend to drive while abroad, be sure to check in advance if there are any restrictions on drivers with epilepsy. Car hire companies and relevant websites will give specific information on the country you are visiting. It is also advisable to check out if your driver's insurance will cover you while driving abroad.



## Useful Phrases

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- 1 Where is the nearest pharmacy?

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- 2 Where is the nearest doctors' surgery?

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- 3 Where is the nearest hospital?

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- 4 Please call a doctor/ambulance.

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- 5 I have epilepsy.

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- 6 I take my medication once/twice /three/four times daily.

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- 7 I take the following drugs for my epilepsy.....

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- 8 I am completely controlled using this medication.

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- 9 I have 2/4/6/8/12/20/40 seizures per week/month/year, usually.

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- 10 I don't usually lose consciousness during a seizure.

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- 11 I always lose consciousness during a seizure.

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- 12 My seizures usually last several minutes.

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- 13 After a seizure it takes me several minutes/hours to become fully aware.

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- 14 I don't normally injure myself during a seizure.

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- 15 Will you take me to my hotel?

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- 16 Will you please call a taxi?

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- 17 Will you please call my friend?

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- 18 I (he/she) do (does) not need an ambulance. In a few minutes. I (he/she) will be recovered.

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name .....

Address .....

Country .....

Age .....

### Contact Tel Number

Home .....

Holiday .....

## MY EPILEPSY INFORMATION

Seizure Type.....

I usually recover in .....minutes

### Current Treatment

Drug Name .....

Daily Dose .....