

Understanding Epilepsy

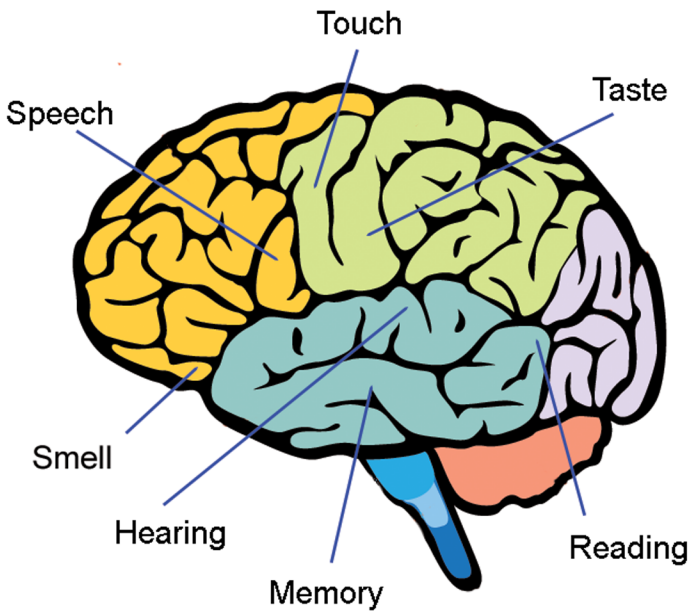


An EasyRead Guide



Epilepsy is an illness that affects your brain.

Your brain controls all the important things your body does.

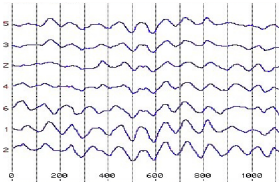




Your brain makes a small amount of electricity to make it work.



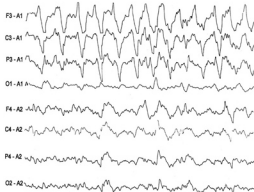
You can see the waves of electricity if you have an EEG (Electro-encephalogram).



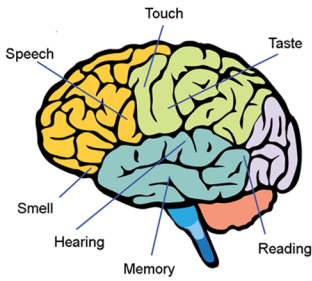
When your brain is working normally your brain waves look a bit like this.



If you have an epileptic fit, your electric brain waves go haywire.



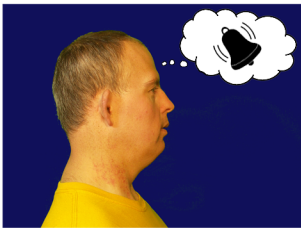
When you have an epileptic fit your brain waves might look like this.



This might make different parts of your brain do strange things.



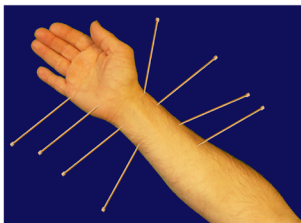
So you might think you can smell or taste something that is not there.



You might think you can hear something or see something that is not there.



You might think you've been here before, but you haven't.



You might get pins and needles in your arms or legs.



Parts of your body might twitch or jerk.



You might get confused and talk nonsense.



Your brain might seem to switch off for a few seconds.

This is called an **absence fit.**

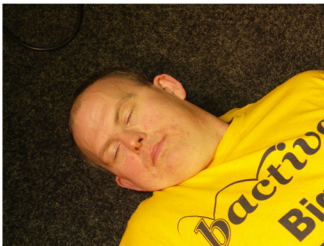
If you have a more serious fit, you might;



Fall over.



Shout out.



Pass out.



Your whole body
might twitch a lot.



You might bite your tongue, but you won't swallow it.



Do not let anyone put anything in your mouth.



If your fit lasts longer than 5 minutes, get someone to call an ambulance.



What can make you have an epileptic fit ?



If you have epilepsy, you are likely to have a fit if you are tired and don't have enough sleep.



If you miss a meal.



If you are stressed.



If you don't take your medication.



If you take a lot of alcohol or drugs.



Flashing lights can make some people have fits.



Try to make a note of when you have a fit. Write down how you felt before the fit.

This might help you to avoid the things that make you have fits.

What to do if you think you are going to have a fit.



If you are with someone, tell them.



Move yourself away from anything that could be dangerous, such as a hot cooker or busy road.



Sit down, and if you think it is getting worse try to lie down.



Loosen your tie
or collar.



Do not let anyone put
anything into your mouth.
You will not swallow
your tongue.



If your fit lasts longer
than 5 minutes, get
someone to call an
ambulance.



Once a year you can ask your doctor's surgery for an Annual Health Check.



They might check your weight and height, blood pressure, ears and eyes.



They might ask you about things like diet, exercise, any medications you take and anything to do with your health.



The appointment lasts about 30 minutes and will help you stay healthy.

Ask at your doctor's surgery about free Annual Health Checks for people with learning disabilities.

For more information about epilepsy, you can get in touch with :

The Epilepsy Society
Telephone 01494 601300
www.epilepsysociety.org.uk

Epilepsy Action
Telephone 0113 210 8800
Helpline 0808 800 5050 (freephone)
www.epilepsy.org.uk

This booklet was made by those who need accessible information working with btm.

For more information or extra copies please contact:



11-12 Eldon Place
Bradford BD1 3AZ
Telephone: 01274 848150
SMS / Text: 07976 825433
E-mail: enquiries@btm.org.uk

© btm 2015 and images under licence from
Shutterstock.com. Version 200415