



Teenagers & epilepsy - something for parents

Something for parents

You may have realized that your child is growing up and changing. They may want more responsibilities and more independence. This should be no different with their epilepsy. As a teen, they are now able to take more control of their epilepsy.

While it is an exciting time to be given more independence, they also will have more responsibilities than most of their peers will. These include;

- Making sure they take their medication on time without your reminder or prompt
- Having a good sleeping pattern
- Knowing how to minimize seizure triggers

Tips for Parents

Letting your child take more responsibility with their epilepsy can be a daunting task. However, with open communication and guidance from you, it can be an enjoyable and educational experience. It is important to equip your teen with enough information for them to understand their epilepsy.

Boundaries are always going to be set by parents, but as your teenager grows up, their yearning for independence also grows. Your goal should be to help them transition with responsibilities, but also boundaries. The following are tips that may help you through this phase of growing and transitioning.

- Be sensitive to your child's insecurities, peer pressures and need for support
- Encourage open communication and acceptance. It is important for your teen to feel comfortable in talking with you. Avoid judgmental phrases and jumping to conclusions, ensure you hear them out.
- Be open in communicating with them about drugs, alcohol, drinking and sexual intercourse
- Encourage your teen to socialize with their peers, however ensure they clearly understand your boundaries

- Help them to think about their actions and their epilepsy so they are able to make independent decisions

Epilepsy and Responsibilities

It is important for you to go through your teenager's medication and emergency management plan with them if they have one. The following tips also help to promote responsibility.

- Encourage them to call an epilepsy counselor themselves if you have always done it in the past. They are more likely to ask the specific questions they would like to and to open up more on certain topics
- Allow them to see their health professionals or specialists on their own or sit in the back of the room to encourage them to take control of the appointment
- Encourage them to problem solve issues that may confront them; guide, but don't do it all for them

By applying the above tips and information you will not only be empowering your teen, but you are also preparing them for the future. As they grow into adults and begin to think about moving out of home, you can have peace of mind that they are going to be responsible with their health and taking care of themselves. The goal of an adolescent with epilepsy is providing them with competency, empowerment and independence.

If you have other questions or concerns please feel free to contact us at Epilepsy Queensland.

Sources: Epilepsy Therapy Project. (2014). Parent & Peer Relationships. Retrieved from <http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/seizures-youth/about-teens-epilepsy/parent-peer-relationships>

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