



Teenagers & epilepsy – things you should know

Employment

Having a part-time or casual job can be a great form of independence and savings. It also opens up opportunities to meet new people and make new friends. Usually epilepsy does not interfere with the performance of any job, however if you have frequent and uncontrolled seizures there may be some restrictions. Overall, you cannot be discriminated against because you have epilepsy.

However some safety concerns make some jobs unsuitable. It may be difficult to obtain employment in areas such as public transport, aviation, armed forces, police or trades involving dangerous machinery. It is beneficial to take this into consideration when considering your future career as there may be limitations in some areas depending on how well your seizures are controlled.

Should you tell your employer about your epilepsy?

This is entirely your decision. Some people with well controlled seizures may choose not to. However if your epilepsy is not that well controlled it is probably important to discuss this with your employer. Remember the employer's concern is how well you can do the job and safety around the workplace. Show them you are a capable person. Concentrate on what you can offer them: that you can do the job and do it well. Then talk about your epilepsy. Explain the fact about your epilepsy. You could include:

- What type of seizure you have?
- If your seizures occur at certain times?
- How long do your seizures go for?
- If you have any seizure triggers?

- Provide a management plan
- Let them know information is available to help support them including workplace training

Sports

There is no reason why you shouldn't participate in any sports at or outside of school. But there are some sports where you may need to take some extra precautions, particularly if your seizures aren't fully controlled.

These include:

- Boxing
- Full-contact karate
- Mountain climbing
- Aviation sports
- Gymnastics
- Horseback riding
- Scuba diving
- Water-skiing
- Swimming
- Surfing
- Mountain bike riding
- Archery
- Motor cross
- Shooting

It's always a good idea if you are engaging in any of the above sports to do them with another person or friend. Contact sports and swimming can be considered dangerous for people with epilepsy. If you are proactive in applying caution and have a plan in case you do have a seizure there is no reason why you shouldn't be able to engage in these activities.

date will react based on your approach. Of course that doesn't mean that you should minimize something that has a significant impact in your life.

Some good tips to remember:

- Wear protective clothing, e.g. helmet, padded vest
- Wear your medical alert bracelet (if you have one)
- Keep hydrated be aware of energy drinks
- DON'T take steroids as they can alter the affect of your medications

Driving

If you have epilepsy, you will be able to hold a learners permit and drivers license as long as your seizures are well controlled. There are National guidelines that have been developed to assist with applications for people with epilepsy to ensure drivers do not put themselves or others at risk on Queensland roads. Depending on your seizure type, you may need to present a medical certificate from your treating doctor, GP or specialist to Queensland Transport. Additional to a medical certificate you will need to fill out an extra form (S2712). No extra fee will be charged for these forms or certificates.

You and your doctor/ neurologist

Having a good rapport or good understanding with your neurologist or doctor is always a good idea. Don't be unsure or afraid about speaking openly with them about your epilepsy. They are there to help you and want what is best for you. By keeping good contact with them and arranging regular check ups you will be able to get the best treatment possible. It also allows you to ask any questions that you may have concerning your epilepsy or other health issues.

Dating and epilepsy

There is no reason why you should rush into telling anyone about your epilepsy. Remember when starting a relationship, everything is new. Be open and honest and build a strong sense of trust. Always be yourself.

What is the best way to tell your boyfriend/girlfriend about your epilepsy Be casual! If you make a big deal, it becomes a big deal. Avoid framing it like "I have a secret" or "Don't freak out but...". Chances are your

Peer communication

Friends are important at any stage in life and sometimes if you don't tell your friends about your epilepsy they may not understand a lot about the things you are going through. People sometimes fear what they don't understand. Who you wish to tell about your epilepsy is completely up to you. Your decision may depend partly on your type of seizures. Some people think seizures are mainly body jerking (tonic-clonic seizure) and they may not be aware that seizures can also involve blank staring (absence seizure) or uncontrolled movements like myoclonic seizures.

If you are a bit unsure about telling one of your friends ask yourself these questions:

- Do you spend a lot of time with this person?
- Are you likely to have seizures while you are with them?
- How much do you trust this person?

It is important to discuss your epilepsy with your friends so they can better understand where you are coming from.

Once they understand your epilepsy, and the side effects you may experience, your friends can be a great source of support. Don't be afraid to ask your friends for help, that's what they're there for!

Sources: Disabled not Discarded! (2011). *Epilepsy: Some of the most famous people in history were in the club*. Retrieved <http://disabledaccessdenied.wordpress.com/2011/09/16/epilepsy-some-of-the-most-famous-people-in-history-were-in-the-club/>
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Although every effort has been made to ensure accurate and up to date information is provided, Epilepsy Queensland and its advisors cannot accept any liability in relation to the information provided. It is strongly recommended that you discuss any information with your doctor as to whether it

