

Fact Sheet 10

Be Empowered

When a person is newly diagnosed with epilepsy there is an adjustment period. Questions are asked, “Why me?”, and a whole range of emotions can be displayed from denial, sadness, grief, or anger. These in turn can affect self-esteem: a person can become fearful of his/her condition, anxious, embarrassed, or even angry. Relationships can suffer, employment potential can be compromised and a person’s ability to drive a car or to be ‘normal’ becomes an issue. But it doesn’t have to be like this. Managing your epilepsy can be a positive experience, although it may take a while for you to come to that conclusion, and that is okay too. People react differently to their diagnosis and it does take time to feel comfortable about being a new you!

Epilepsy is a neurological condition. You are still the same person but you have a condition that is beyond your control. A neurologist will help you to control your seizures, and then it is up to you to do the rest. Don’t be controlled by your seizures but be in control of them and your life.

Here is what you can do.

- Gain as much information on your condition as you can. Web-based learning is great. There is a lot of information that is easily accessible these days, and from all around the world. You will come to realize that you are not alone; in fact, there are 50 million people out there with epilepsy, just like you!
- Knowledge is power. Information can help you to reduce your anxiety by gaining an insight into your condition. Ask yourself some questions and find out the answers. The brain likes to be exercised after all. By educating yourself you can educate others
- Become a detective and work out what your seizure triggers are. This may take some time and so keep an accurate seizure diary. Over time you may understand what is

triggering your seizures. Avoid drinking caffeine and alcohol because these are well known seizure triggers, as are missing your meals, stress, and not taking your medication. Your seizure trigger may show something quite different (see seizure triggers in “My Seizure Diary”).

- Manage your seizures by taking your prescribed medication accurately. The brain likes to be given the same amount of your medication at the same time each day. Remind yourself, with an alarm call, when another dose of medication is required.
- We all like to stay up late but it is important that you get enough sleep each day. Aim for eight hours of sleep a night. Wouldn't that be great?
- Recognise and respond to your stress because your brain doesn't like being stressed out. Learn relaxation techniques: perhaps take up yoga or tai chi, or something similar.
- Be a winner in the “confidence contest”. By meeting the world positively means that you can cope with your epilepsy. Play an active role, rather than a passive one. You will feel so much better about yourself.
- Know that you can do almost anything within reason. Go on a ‘journey of self-discovery’. Life is an adventure after all.
- Become an epilepsy ambassador. Help to knock down those prejudices and myths. Be open about your epilepsy and show people who you really are.
- Join an epilepsy social group. You could go and discuss your epilepsy, or just simply enjoy being amongst friends who happen to have ... epilepsy!
- Remember that you are not alone. We are here for you and we will help you to discover how you can live life to the full and to become empowered. Epilepsy is, after all, just a tiny part of who you are. Don't let the idea of having epilepsy dominate your thoughts and feelings. Embrace life and enjoy it. Be empowered!

Famous People with Epilepsy

“There have always been people with epilepsy. Since the dawn of time, epilepsy has affected millions of people from beggars to kings. It is one of the oldest conditions of the human race.”

The names of 32 famous people are hidden in this word find.

Do not try to find the names in brackets (), they are there to identify the person only. If you google “famous people with epilepsy” you will find out more information on these characters.

Bumper Word Find

M	I	C	H	E	L	A	N	G	E	L	O	T	W	U	S	V	X	T	R
A	N	Y	A	L	E	W	I	S	C	A	R	R	O	L	L	O	P	A	I
R	I	T	N	N	O	T	W	E	N	C	A	A	S	I	R	I	S	L	C
G	N	H	N	E	N	C	H	A	C	F	M	B	K	U	W	X	T	A	H
A	A	A	I	I	A	H	U	L	P	N	C	A	E	S	A	R	B	L	A
U	G	G	B	L	R	A	G	F	D	A	N	N	Y	G	L	O	V	E	R
X	A	O	A	Y	D	I	O	R	L	C	H	R	I	S	T	I	E	X	D
H	P	R	L	O	O	K	W	E	B	A	H	A	N	D	E	L	T	A	B
E	O	A	T	U	D	O	E	D	W	A	R	D	G	B	R	F	B	N	U
M	L	S	E	N	A	V	A	S	O	C	R	A	T	E	S	S	U	D	R
I	O	E	N	G	V	S	V	V	S	E	L	R	A	H	C	Z	U	E	T
N	C	J	N	H	I	K	I	L	O	Q	U	S	I	U	O	L	T	R	O
G	I	W	Y	X	N	Y	N	N	Z	B	A	M	A	R	T	I	N	T	N
W	N	D	S	F	C	H	G	J	Z	Y	P	B	O	I	T	G	E	H	C
A	Z	R	O	T	I	E	O	P	N	E	L	L	A	R	A	G	D	E	R
Y	V	I	N	C	E	N	T	V	A	N	G	O	G	H	B	L	A	G	T
N	A	P	O	L	E	O	N	B	O	N	A	P	A	R	T	E	Q	R	O
S	C	H	U	M	A	N	N	L	A	L	F	R	E	D	N	O	B	E	L
K	M	D	J	S	N	E	K	C	I	D	S	E	L	R	A	H	C	A	R
S	J	T	H	E	O	D	O	R	E	R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T	M

Michelangelo
Leonardo da Vinci
Sir Isaac Newton
Sir Walter Scott
Danny Glover
Pythagoras
Alfred Noble
Charles V (of Spain)
Neil Young
Martin (Luther)
(Robert) Schumann

Margaux Hemingway
Lewis Carroll
Hannibal
Nicolo Paganini
Alexander (the Great)
Hugo Weaving
Edgar Allen Poe
Richard Burton
Theodore Roosevelt
Louis (X111 of France)
(George Frederick) Handel

Caesar (Julius)
Tchaikovsky (Peter)
(Agatha) Christie
Edward (Lear)
Socrates
(Alfred Lord) Tennyson
Charles Dickens
Vincent van Gogh
Napoleon Bonaparte
Alfred (the Great)