

Fact Sheet 16

Epilepsy and Depression

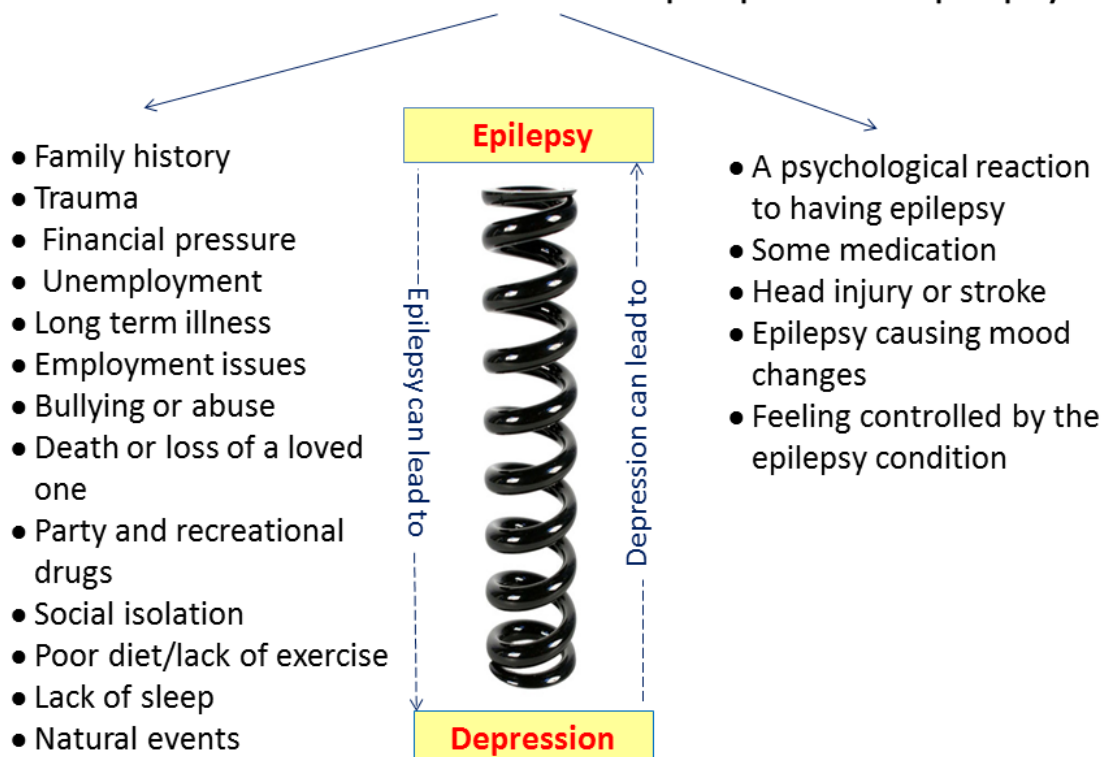
Depression can occur as part of a person's epilepsy. Some people may feel a sense of hopelessness hours, or even days, *before* a seizure (pre-ictal). This feeling usually resolves after the seizure.

Others may experience sadness, fear, anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts, *during* a simple partial seizure. This is called ictal depression.

Low mood/depressive symptoms *following* an epileptic seizure are described as post-ictal depression. People can become tearful, experience a sense of hopelessness, become irritable and have sleep problems or even suicidal thoughts. These feelings commonly last 12 to 24 hours after a seizure.

People with epilepsy can also feel depressed because of stress factors affecting the quality of their life.

Some stress factors that can affect people with epilepsy



If a symptom of low mood or sadness persists for several weeks, then a visit to a qualified health professional (such as a GP or neurologist) is important. It may be that the depressive mood is the result of an anti-epileptic medication that a person is taking, or it may be the result of one or more of the factors listed above. Self-diagnosis is never recommended. For more information on depression, it is important for a person with epilepsy to seek medical advice for effective treatment for both the depression and epilepsy, because untreated depression can potentially worsen epileptic seizures.

Mood barometer



- It is okay to feel unhappy and sad some of the time

Seek help if you:

- Feel unhappy most of the time
- Lose interest in life
- Can't cope with things
- Feel restless, agitated or irritable
- Have problems with weight
- Have lost self confidence
- Can't get to sleep easily
- Avoid people
- Have difficulties with concentration
- Have decreased energy
- Have changes in appetite
- Have negative thoughts about self
- Have thoughts of suicide

**If in doubt, seek medical advice.
Depression can be treated.**

Disclaimer: this fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult your doctor or other health professional for advice regarding your epilepsy.