

# Identifying Your Seizure Triggers

Some people find that their seizures are provoked by certain events, health issues, or substances. Not all people have seizure triggers, however for those that do, identifying your unique seizure triggers can play an essential part in risk reduction and increase your likelihood of seizure freedom.

Keeping a seizure diary could assist to pinpoint the specific events that occurred in the lead up to having a seizure. Monitoring your seizures, what happened before them, and if this is a recurring pattern, may help you to identify your seizure triggers.

Talk to your doctor about these triggers and what you can do to minimise their impact.

What provokes seizures in one person will be different to another.

**Some of the most commonly reported seizure triggers include:**

- >> **Stress**
- >> **Lack of sleep**
- >> **Missed anti-seizure medications**
- >> **Excess alcohol**

## Physical Triggers

- **Missed medication** is the most common reason for breakthrough seizures. Knowing what you have to take, when, how, and why is important. There are many ways that you can ensure you don't miss your medication (e.g. special medication boxes, timers, apps, webster packs from the pharmacist).
- **Medication interactions** (always tell your doctor and your pharmacist what medications you are taking including any over-the-counter medicines, complementary therapies or herbal medications)
- Any **changes** to your medication type, dosage or brand
- **Tiredness** due to lack of sleep or poor quality sleep
- Some **herbal products/essential oils**, e.g. rosemary, sage, fennel, eucalyptus, hyssop, wormwood, camphor and spike lavender may provoke seizures or adversely interact with the way your seizure medication works
- **Hormonal** fluctuations e.g. puberty, menstrual cycles, menopause, pregnancy
- **Growth** spurt
- **Nutritional deficiencies** or low blood sugar e.g. vitamin and mineral deficiencies, poor diet, excess caffeine intake (including in tea, coffee and energy drinks)
- **Dehydration, hunger or thirst**
- **Illness** with or without fever, infections or allergies
- Illicit **drug** use, excessive **alcohol** use
- **Physical overexertion**



The information contained in this list is made available as a **guide only**, it is **not an exhaustive list**, but may help to recognise your triggers.

This document is **not intended as medical advice**. Epilepsy and triggers is a conversation best had with your treating doctor.

## Emotional Triggers

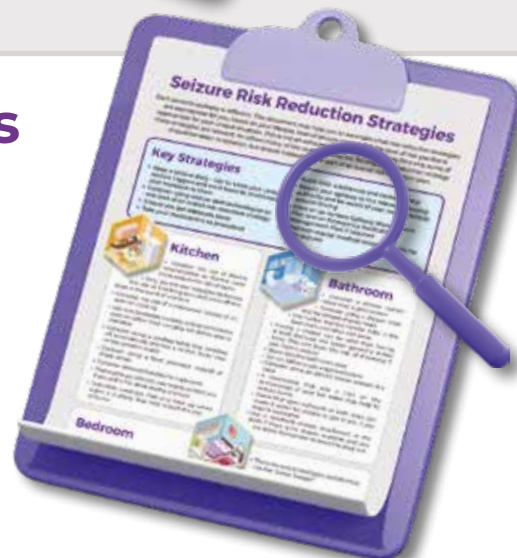


- **Stress** and **emotionally charged** situations e.g. worry, grief, anxiety, depression, fear, anger, overexcitement
- **Overscheduling** e.g. too many commitments or not enough rest time, changes in routine affecting sleep patterns and leading to anxiety



## Environmental Triggers

- **Temperature extremes** e.g. overheating, sudden temperature fluctuations
- **Weather extremes** e.g. hot/cold / humid/ barometric pressure changes
- **Bright lights** e.g. strong sun glare/full moon or lightning\*
- **Visual stimuli** e.g. flashing/flickering lights, computer games, TV, strobe lighting\*
- **Optical distortion** e.g. certain optical illusions and patterns\*
- **Sudden sounds**
- **Chemicals** and/or **strong smells** e.g. petrol, glue, perfumes or bleach



- Other environmental triggers could include **immersion** in water, **unexpected touch**, **pollution**

*\*Please note only some people (less than 5%) will experience photosensitive epilepsy.*

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