

10 Tips for Supporting Someone Living With Epilepsy



S a c d

Mom often takes on many roles in the family—caretaker, health care decision maker and cheerleader. If you have a son or daughter living with epilepsy, you'll often take on all three. Laying a strong foundation for your child, while still taking care of oneself, can be challenging. These tips can help:

C ca Nurture an environment of openness. It's important to have a candid dialogue about your child's condition, so they feel comfortable coming to you with any feelings or concerns. Talking about what it means for them is important, as is talking to others about what it means for you. Also, letting neighbors, coaches, teachers, school officials and other important people know is key to fostering a team approach.

Ma d d c Start by choosing the right health care professional. Give your child the best possible chance for success by seeking care from a specialist who is familiar with epilepsy, such as a neurologist or epileptologist. Do your research and ask lots of questions. If you don't feel comfortable from the beginning, keep looking.

G d c d a d ac cc It's easy to see your child's strengths. Encourage them to participate in activities where their skills will be best utilized. For example, partaking in an individual sport rather than a team one may offer significant benefits. Also, by giving your child responsibilities and allowing him or her to make or contribute to important decisions, you'll be empowering your youngster to be his or her own advocate one day.

R b T ca d a ca You know when you're on an airplane and they say to secure your oxygen mask first? Same idea here—you can't help your family if you aren't taking care of yourself. Make sure to schedule some time for self-care, relaxation and nurturing other important relationships in your life. Also, it helps to have a support network of other parents caring for children with epilepsy. You can find resources for this at www.EpilepsyAdvocate.com.

A a b a d Create an action plan so that you're ready if a seizure occurs. That includes always carrying important phone numbers and any necessary medications.

S a ad

Do you have a friend, coworker, spouse, parent or sibling living with epilepsy? Maybe you want to be supportive but aren't sure how. These tips can help:

Ta By normalizing conversation about epilepsy and seizures, your friend or loved one will feel more comfortable talking about their concerns and fears. Also, don't be afraid to express your own feelings as well. Witnessing a seizure can be scary—if it happens to you, talk about it.

D Learn what you can do in the event of a seizure by asking a medical professional, doing research and talking to the person who has epilepsy. Visit www.epilepsyfoundation.org/about/firstaid to read their tips on first aid for seizures. Also, it helps to understand terminology and to know what resources and support options are available.

B a c ad a dad ca Stay optimistic and celebrate seizure control and important milestones. Educate those around you and encourage them to get involved with epilepsy awareness.

O a d ca a Your friend or loved one may want some extra support or someone to take notes about medical procedures or other important topics. This will also allow you to be a solid sounding board for confusing medical decisions. In addition, people with epilepsy may not recall what happens during a seizure, so caregivers should try to communicate that information to the physician.

Ca a b Whether it's for specific doctors, local hospitals or other loved ones, always be able to contact the people who you may need or want informed of any given situation.
