**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Be reassuring and remain calm. The person may be unaware of the seizure. If the person is driving, try to stop the vehicle to prevent an accident.

**Stay with the person:**
- Time the seizure.
- Leave person in car seat with seat belt on.
- If person is sitting in the front, recline the seat if possible.
- Lean person slightly to one side to aid drainage of any fluid/food/vomit in mouth.
- Support head and protect airway as required.
- After the jerking stops, carefully remove the person from the car and place them in the recovery position if possible or required.
- Observe and reassure until recovered.

Call an ambulance if the seizure lasts longer than 6 minutes.

Inform the person what happened when they are fully recovered in order for him/her to record information in their seizure diaries.

**STAYING MOBILE**

An inability to drive due to epilepsy can be very frustrating and a blow to your sense of independence. It is important to note that ALL seizures count, even minor ones, no matter how you view your condition.

If a person with epilepsy continues to drive while seizures are uncontrolled he/she will not be covered by insurance and not only be committing a legal offence, but also placing him/herself and other road users at risk.

Remember that there are other ways to stay mobile: explore public transport options or organise a lift club to share costs with other people in your area.
EPILEPSY AND DRIVING

Getting a driver’s licence is a significant moment for any person. It represents freedom of movement and independence. However, it also represents the serious responsibility of practicing road safety. As the only national organisation serving people with epilepsy, we recognise that if you have epilepsy, this responsibility is even greater. Thus, you should make the decision about whether it is safe for you to drive after careful consideration of both your doctor’s advice and South African law.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT EPILEPSY AND DRIVING?

The law regarding driving and epilepsy differs quite considerably in different parts of the world. According to the South African National Road Traffic Act (Regulations 99 and 102, Section 15) you are not permitted to drive if you have uncontrolled epilepsy. Apart from this, deciding whether you should drive or not is left to the individual concerned and his or her doctor/neurologist. The decision is based on the type and severity of seizures, and the degree to which they are controlled. Studies have shown that people with uncontrolled seizures do have an increased risk of a car accident. People whose seizures are controlled, however, do not have a significantly increased risk.

THE LEARNER’S LICENCE

Obtaining a learner’s licence gets affected by the clause from the National Road Traffic Act (NRTA) on the test sheet:

*Regulations 99 and 101
Section 15: Disqualification from obtaining or holding learner’s or driving licence

- A person shall be disqualified from obtaining or holding a learner’s or driving licence – if he or she is suffering from one of the following diseases or disabilities:
  (i) Uncontrolled epilepsy;”

You can only take the test if you have adhered to the regulation, which means that if you have controlled epilepsy you can attempt to obtain a learner’s licence. If you are not honest about the severity of your epilepsy, you could be facing Regulation 102, Section 16 of the NRTA:

“Failure to disclose disqualification in respect of licence authorising driving of motor vehicle prohibited

1 No person shall, when applying for a learner’s or driving licence, willfully fail to disclose any disqualification to which he or she is subject to, in terms of section 15.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY REGARDING DRIVING

Regular follow-up examinations by a neurologist are essential and a compliance with prescribed treatment and accurate reporting of seizures, is a must!

Even if your seizures are controlled and your doctor/neurologist has given you the OK to drive, it’s important to always remember the following:

- If you change or stop your medication suddenly, refrain from driving until your doctor advises you it’s safe to be on the road again.
- If you have a seizure for the first time in years, stop driving and consult your doctor.
- Don’t drive when you’re tired, stressed or ill, as you’re more likely to have a seizure at such times.
- Never drink and drive.