



Breakthrough Seizure Guide

Navigating and Preventing Seizures

Breakthrough seizures—those that occur after a period of seizure control—can be unsettling. This guide offers evidence-based strategies to help individuals with epilepsy manage and prevent such episodes.

Understanding Breakthrough Seizures

A breakthrough seizure is an epileptic episode that occurs despite ongoing treatment and a period of seizure freedom. Common triggers include:

- Missed Medications – even a single missed dose can trigger a seizure.
- Sleep Deprivation – lack of sleep (quantity or quality) can lower the seizure threshold.
- Stress – emotional stress may provoke seizures.
- Alcohol and Substance Use – can interfere with anti-seizure medications.
- Illness or Fever – can disrupt seizure control.
- Hormonal Changes – may impact seizure patterns.

Prevention Strategies

Implementing healthy habits and managing triggers are key components of seizure prevention:

1. Medication Adherence:

- Use pill organizers, set reminders or alarms, or use specialized apps.
- Never stop or change medications without physician input and guidance.

2. Lifestyle Modifications:

- Maintain regular sleep and meal schedules.
- Engage in physical activity and stay hydrated.
- Avoid personal triggers, like flashing lights and alcohol.

3. Stress Management:

- Practice meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
- Seek counseling or support groups as needed.

4. Seizure Diary:

- Track episodes, triggers, and medication adherence to identify trends.

When to Contact Your Healthcare Provider

- After any first-time seizure or unexpected, breakthrough seizure.
- If seizure frequency or severity increases.
- Before adjusting any medications.
- When experiencing medication side effects.
- To discuss lifestyle or trigger concerns.

Available Resources and Support

- Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan – Here for You Helpline –800-377-6226
- Seizure Action Plans – personalized response plans.
- Support Groups – connect with others through local or virtual communities.



Additional Tips

- Wear a medical ID bracelet to alert responders.
- Educate others on seizure first aid.
- Carry your Seizure Action Plan and Rescue Medications with you at all times.
- Keep emergency contacts accessible.
- Schedule regular neurologist check-ups.

By adhering to your treatment plan, making informed lifestyle choices, and utilizing available resources, you can effectively manage epilepsy and reduce the likelihood of breakthrough seizures.