

# Treating Seizures: Medicines

If you had a seizure, your health care provider will create a treatment plan for you. You may be prescribed medicines called antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) or antiseizure medicines (ASMs). These medicines greatly reduce or prevent seizures in most people who take them. Other treatment choices may be available for some people.



## Your medicine plan

Your health care provider will work with you to create the best medicine plan for you:

- **Type of medicine.** There are many types of AEDs or ASMs. The first type you try will likely help you. If not, your provider may suggest another type of medicine or a combination of medicines. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, your medicines might need to be adjusted by your provider to protect your developing baby. You may also need special vitamins to reduce the risk for birth defects.
- **Dosage.** You will probably be started at a low dosage. The dosage will be slowly increased until your seizures are better controlled, or you reach a target dosage.

After you start taking medicines, you may have follow-up testing. These tests measure the level of medicine in your blood. You will eventually need to have these tests from time to time. But certain medicines don't need lab testing. Your provider may also need to check certain blood tests to watch for side effects while on these medicines.

## When taking medicines

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DO take your medicines exactly as directed.

DO keep a current list of all medicines you're taking and show it to your health care provider. Make sure you show the list and ask about interactions with any provider prescribing new medicine for you.

DO know that certain medicines can interfere with how birth control pills work.

DO store pills in a cool, dry place (not in the bathroom).

DON'T stop taking your medicines, skip a dose, or change your medicine amount without your provider's approval.

DON'T change brands of medicine (usually generic medicines are OK), or even forms of one brand (from tablet to liquid, for instance), without your provider's approval.

DON'T take herbal supplements or antacids without talking to your provider first. Ask your pharmacist about taking over-the-counter medicines.

## **Possible side effects of antiseizure medicines**

Antiseizure medicines often have effects that are not intended (side effects). Most of these effects go away after a few weeks. The most common side effects of these medicines include:

- Dizziness.
- Trouble concentrating.
- Tiredness.
- Stomach upset.
- Weight gain or loss.
- Depression.
- Allergic reaction, such as a rash or fever.
- Kidney stones.
- Tingling sensations.