

Welcome to this special Alert-IT how-to guide to Christmas!

We are heading into what is both a wonderful festive season of fun and, potentially, a time of broken routine, socialising and stress. So we thought it might be useful to offer some top tips both to people who have epilepsy, and to those who love, care, are just friends, or all three of these!...Here goes:

For those with epilepsy



What to do when someone has a seizure:

General Advice:

- Gently guide them away from danger
- Don't restrict them
- Reassure them
- Don't put anything in their mouth
- Don't offer them food or drink
- Stay until the seizure has ended / they have come round
- Tell them what has happened

Extra advice for major convulsive seizures:

- Support their head
- Loosen belts and necklaces, and remove glasses
- Don't restrict their movements
- Place them in the recovery position
- Ensure their airway is clear

Seizure with falls:

- Administer first aid as necessary
- Place them in recovery position
- Ensure their airway is clear

Only call 999 if:

- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes; more seizures occur very soon after; or the person is injured / doesn't regain consciousness.

The information on this has been provided by the charity Epilepsy Research UK (www.epilepsyresearch.org.uk).

epilepsy
research uk

This does not represent their endorsement of any of the products/technology highlighted in this document. For more information about epilepsy, please email info@eruk.org.uk or call 020 8747 5024.

1. Remember to take your anti-epileptic medication as prescribed

With the changes in routine around Christmas it is easy to forget to take drug doses. Be sure to stay vigilant and set alarms if you need to.

2. Drink in moderation

At Christmas it's easy to lose track of your alcohol intake. Be aware that any more than 2 units per day can cause changes in your blood levels of anti-epileptic drug and increase your risk of seizures. Consider drinking non-alcoholic beer/wine instead.

3. Avoid stimulants

High caffeine energy drinks and recreational drugs can increase the risk of seizures and should be avoided.

4. Let people know

Throughout your Christmas celebrations, ensure that there is always one person with you who knows what to do if you have a seizure. If you are staying with friends, make sure that they are informed.

5. Be organised

People with epilepsy often report being stressed in the run-up to a seizure. You can try to avoid stress this Christmas by planning ahead, keeping lists and doing a bit at a time. Why not shop online and escape the crowds. Don't forget to organise your transport in good time too.

6. Get plenty of rest

Regular sleep patterns are important for people with epilepsy. If you are planning a late night, why not have a nap before you go out? You can also try to take a short time out each day to relax and reduce stress.

7. Beware of festive lights

Approximately 3% of people with epilepsy are photosensitive. If you are among them, beware of flashing Christmas lights or fireworks that may trigger your seizures.

8. Try not to skip meals

Some people with epilepsy are sensitive to delayed/missed meals. In spite of the bustle, try to maintain a regular eating pattern during the festive period.

9. Avoid overexcitement

Christmas is a particularly exciting time for children, but excitement can have similar effects on the body as stress. Maintaining a calm environment in the house, with a stable routine, will help to avoid overexcitement and sleep problems.

10. You know what works for you! Try and maintain your usual routine

For carers:

There are more than 40 types of epileptic seizure. Some of these are very obvious (e.g. major convulsive, tonic clonic seizures), whilst others can be extremely subtle (e.g. some absences seizures). If you know someone with epilepsy, here are some tips to help you look out for them during the festive period.

Try and find out as much as you can about your friend's epilepsy, for example:

- How often do they have seizures?
- What type(s) of seizure do they have?
- How long do they usually last?
- What are the triggers?
- Do they usually fall during a seizure?
- Do they lose consciousness?

Ask your friend what signs you should look out for, for example:

- A sudden change in temperament, e.g. aggression or distance
- Jerking/twitching movements, e.g. of the arm, hand or face
- Strange behaviour
- Slurring of the speech
- Decreased responsiveness

If you notice any of the signs:

DO:

- gently guide your friend away from any immediate danger
- be understanding and reassuring
- stay with them until the seizure has ended/they have come round

DON'T:

- restrict their movement
- give them anything to eat or drink

If your friend falls during their seizure:

- Tend to any injuries and administer first aid as necessary
- Place them in the recovery position **unless** you suspect they have damaged their neck/back/spine

If your friend develops a major convulsive seizure:

DO:

- try and note the time that the seizure starts
- ensure their head is supported and place a coat or cushion underneath it
- loosen any belts and neckwear, and remove glasses

DON'T:

- try and move them unless they are in danger
- restrict their movement
- put anything in their mouth

When your friend's convulsions have ended:

- Place them in the recovery position **unless** you suspect they have damaged their neck/back/spine
- Check their airways and breathing
- Reassure them and minimise embarrassment if incontinence has occurred

You should only call 999 if:

- your friend's seizure lasts more than five minutes or two minutes longer than usual
- they develop another seizure soon after the first has ended
- they don't regain consciousness
- they are injured

The logo for 'Ep-it' is displayed within a large red circle. The text 'Ep-it' is in a white, sans-serif font. The 'i' in 'it' is stylized with a blue dot and a blue vertical bar, resembling a lowercase 'i' from a different font or a specific branding element.

For Everyone:

Often, when faced with a situation you are not familiar with we forget how to act, what to do and how to help. Therefore along with this guide, we have produced a downloadable credit card sized piece of information covering the essentials when someone suffers a seizure.

So whether you find yourself assisting a friend or a stranger you must remember not to panic and that if you Lend a H.A.N.D you can't go far wrong.

Help

Stop and Help

Analyse

Analyse the situation (What type of seizure is it? Are they in danger? Are they hurt?)

Need

What do you need to do/what do they need (Move them away from any danger. Place them in the recovery position. Call an ambulance if a fit lasts more than 5 minutes)

Discuss

Most people come around with no recollection, so discuss what has happened and make sure they don't need any more help.



Case Study

Suffolk County Council looked for an assistive technology solution for Christopher, 36, who suffers with Tonic Clonic seizures which occur frequently during the day and night. He lives alone and frequently collapses as a result of his epilepsy, which goes undetected and results in numerous injuries.

A Smart watch was supplied which linked to his mobile and immediately sent an alert to his brother. Christopher found the smart watch comfortable to wear throughout the day and night and when a seizure took place the technology sent an alarm via his mobile phone to his brother who could summon assistance, it also gives a GPS location directly to his brother's mobile phone.

Prior to the Smart Watch, Christopher not only suffered injury through his seizures which were going undetected but he was very uneasy about going out, even to the local shops. The technology has given him increased independence, which has allowed him to go out more often, and given peace of mind and reassurance to his family.

Case Study and Testimonial

Mr and Mrs Wood

We found this bed alarm after our son suffered a long seizure in his sleep and nearly choked, luckily we found him in time to prevent this but our minds were sent wild with what ifs, so after some research we found Alert-it. Our first thought was can we justify spending the money on such an item, the answer was yes when we thought back to what had happened. We have found the bed alarm to work really well for us and our epileptic son. Although we haven't had a large seizure we have had some small ones resulting in him dribbling/wetting the bed the alarm has alerted us on all of these occasions.

We have full faith in this alarm and feel a lot more relaxed about the what if situation, the alarm is simple easy to use and the alarm wakes you up with ease. We had a great experience in buying this alarm as David explained everything and understood our needs, he even made a modification for us so we had a pillow and bed wetting sheet cable which also has worked really well. We would recommend this product to anyone requiring a bed alarm as it puts your mind totally at rest.

Alert-it is a UK supplier of monitors and alarms that help to reduce the stress of caring for people.

We can't deny that our products aren't important to us, but in truth what we really care about is making sure that our customers are supported and helped to make the right choices and to buy what's right for them.

What follows are some expert thoughts and case studies about how technology can be used when caring for someone, how it can help and why it's increasingly being seen as being increasingly important:

"With the ever increasing demands on people having to work longer, retire later and care for people in their own home, in my opinion the use of the technology releases the burden and stress of a carer having to be with someone they are caring for 24/7. Also the person being cared for does not always want to have the intrusion of someone being with them 24/7. Many carers are still working full time, or in many situations now families don't live local so are not able to visit to help.

More older people are now living on their own in their own home (which is where they want to be). With the support of the technology, and without it replacing the human touch of a carer altogether, risks and activities can be monitored safely and timely. Technology that is reliable and robust is an important factor in gaining the confidence of the user and the carer, and if the correct technology is installed in the first instance the joint caring role of technology and carers works very well with outcomes that suit everyone. It is also a very cost efficient way of adding extra care at a one off cost and the person being cared for being able to maintain their independence for longer

The technology can alert in an instant when a problem arises, which can reduce the need for hospital admission and deterioration of the person in need."

Information provided by a Local Authority delivering technology to users of all ages and abilities.





Alert-it is the UK's foremost provider of Plesiocare technology, monitors and alarms that can reduce the stress of caring for individuals with a wide range of needs, whilst dramatically improving the experience and quality of life of those being cared for.

Our technology has been proven to be amongst the most effective available and has been incorporated into systems provided by industry leaders such as BOSCH, Tunstall, Tyne-Tech, Chubb Possum and Caretec.

At Alert-it we offer so much more than just the product in a box; from your first enquiry you will be listened to by our experienced staff, all of who know the capabilities of each of our products and will be able to advise you on what will and, importantly, what will not be suitable for your own needs and circumstances. As we said earlier, our intention is not to sell as many products as possible, it's to serve the care community in a long term partnership of support and understanding.



Epilepsy Solutions

Epilepsy Solutions is the trading name of Independent Living Supplies Ltd., a company established in 2011 to provide Assistive Technology and Telecare products for those people of any age who wished to remain independent in their homes, or gain more independence through the use of technology.

As the demand for epilepsy monitoring has grown, and to equip us to give the correct advice when asked about monitoring equipment, we've received Epilepsy Awareness Training, and have visited hundreds of people in their homes and care facilities, gaining a real insight into the sometimes devastating effects and hardships suffered by those having to live with epilepsy on a daily basis.

Epilepsy Solutions aims to provide the best available equipment to monitor a customer's condition and circumstances. Our knowledgeable staff is always ready to help with advice and suggestions to ensure you purchase the most suitable and cost effective products available.



Independent Life Solutions (ILS) is a North West based company, established to provide a support service which offers information, advice and choice to people wishing to use technology and adaptations to help them live independently in their own homes.

ILS works with both service users and organisations delivering care and support to identify ways of using telecare and assistive technology to ensure people are safe and confident in their own homes, and that care services are delivered where they are most needed. We are passionate about what we do and will only recommend products which will work effectively having undertaken a full assessment.

ILS can also advise on how telecare and assistive technology can help support organisations to deliver better for less - keeping people at home, where they want to be, and simultaneously generating significant efficiency savings. At ILS our aim is to promote your self-care and assist you to maintain your independence and well-being whilst continuing to live at home or supported living.

Question:

"Why do you find it so important and worthwhile to use assistive technology to give support?"

Answer:

With an aging population and a big drive to keep people at home – which in most cases is everyone's wish – assistive technology is often the key to achieving that aim.

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Ability Answers

Based in Swansea, Ability Answers, suppliers of products and services for people with disabilities are now offering a new Assistive Technology system to complement their extensive Telecare range.

Our Advanced Care Support System alerts family, friends and carers of emergency situations such as falls, epileptic episodes, wandering, panic alarms, pendant alarms, and hypothermia alarms.

Users are able to maintain their independence and freedom, with the peace of mind that carers can be notified of danger via radio pagers, telephone dialler or by activating a legacy Nurse Call system. The system is also fully compatible with traditional Careline call centres.

The entire system is modular in concept, meaning the user starts with only the components they actually need. If their needs change, the system can be upgraded as required; the user is not forced into buying unnecessary extras from the outset.

Ability Answers provides a total bespoke package from design through to installation, servicing, repair, and after sales service. Most solutions can be agreed by telephone, but where necessary our engineers will visit you, determine the correct solution for your situation and produce a detailed quote for the required work. Whether it be a simple single alarm, or a fully automated apartment / house or Telecare system, we will offer you the best solution.

As well as working closely with individuals in a domestic environment, we have extensive experience of working with larger organisations and government bodies. Previous clients include Swansea University, Swansea City Council, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London Borough of Hackney, DVLA, Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council.

We offer:

- 15 years experience in the assistive technology and Telecare market
- Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act.
- Low cost maintenance.
- Peace of mind.
- Fast response.
- Reliability.
- Quality.