
Preparing for your specialist appointment



Getting an appointment with your neurologist may take some time. It's a good idea to use this time to prepare for your visit. You can do this by putting together a short list of the things you will need to take with you, plus a list of any questions or health concerns you may want to discuss. Remember, your relationship with your neurologist is a partnership, and it's in your best interests to share relevant information with them. We've provided the following checklist to help you get started.

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What to take to your appointment (paperwork)

As with most specialist appointments, you will need to take some paperwork with you when you see your neurologist. These will typically include:

- A referral from your GP or other specialist.
- Any results that include information from recent electroencephalogram (EEG), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and computerised tomography (CT) scans.
- Any video recordings that you may have of suspected seizure events.
- A list of current and past medications, including information on why you may have stopped taking certain medications.
- Your seizure record diary with all the symptoms, times and influences that concern you. Some people find digital seizure diary applications useful for tracking and recording seizure activity. If you have this information, you can show it to your neurologist during your appointment.



Asking for what you need

It's easy to get distracted during a specialist appointment. To help you stay on track, write down what you need from them. Here are a few prompts to help you work out what you might need:

- Do you need a new prescription?
- Do you need an airline travel form?
- Do you need a certificate for work or school?

Asking questions

Asking questions and understanding the answers is important to your epilepsy management. Sometimes, asking questions can be difficult, so it's a good idea to write them down beforehand. Some people like to take a family member or friend to their appointments so they have someone there who can listen, take notes, and ask questions. Remember, there's no such thing as a silly question. Even if you feel embarrassed, try to ask the question anyway. Your neurologist is there to help you.

Some of your questions will be unique to you; however, we know that many people with epilepsy want to ask things such as:

- What type of epilepsy and seizures do I have?
- How will my epilepsy affect my daily life, such as work and hobbies?
- How will my epilepsy affect my physical and mental health?

- What precautions should I put in place?
- What lifestyle changes can I make to manage my epilepsy?
- Will I still be able to drive?
- Will I experience any side-effects from having seizures?
- What is the best treatment, and what will it do?
- Are there any short or long-term side-effects to the prescribed anti-seizure medication?
- If there are any side-effects, will they be noticeable to me, my family, or my friends?
- How and when do I take this medication?
- How will other medications interact with my anti-seizure medication?
- How will drinking alcohol affect my seizures and my medications?
- Is there anything else I need to know about my epilepsy?

Before you leave

Before you leave your appointment, be sure to do the following:

- Make a follow-up appointment with your neurologist if needed.
- Ask when your neurologist will get back to you with any test results.
- If your neurologist prescribes medication, make sure you fully understand the following:
 1. What has been prescribed, and what should it do for you?
 2. If there is a generic substitution, that is acceptable (it is not recommended that you swap between generic and brand-name medications).
 3. Exactly when and how you are to take your medication.
 4. Are there any side-effects of this new medication?
 5. What to do if you vomit within an hour of taking the medication.
 6. What to do if you accidentally miss a dose.

Other resources

If you need help completing or updating your Epilepsy Management Plan or Emergency Medication Management Plan, call the National Epilepsy Support Service on 1300 761 487.

Email: support@epilepsysmart.org.au

- **Epilepsy Smart Australia**
www.epilepsysmart.org.au
- **Digital seizure diary application**
There are a wide range of apps available, and most are free of charge. As every app is different, you should look in your app store or online for one that is best for you.

Epilepsy support

The National Epilepsy Support Service (NESS) is available Mon – Sat 9am – 7pm (AEST) to provide support and information across Australia. Phone: 1300 761 487. Email: support@epilepsysmart.org.au

Lived experience

We recognise all people living with epilepsy and the impact it has on their lives. We take a moment to acknowledge the lived experience they have shared with us. In sharing their stories, we acknowledge the strength and resilience people living with epilepsy have shown in the face of not getting a fair go.

A medical note

The information contained in this publication provides general information about epilepsy. It does not provide specific advice. Specific health and medical advice should always be obtained from a qualified health professional.

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Epilepsy Smart Australia Program

National Epilepsy Support Service 1300 761 487

Website epilepsysmart.org.au



Australian Government
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