

Let's Learn About Epilepsy

An Activity Book For Children



About 300,000 people in Canada have epilepsy.



Anyone can have a seizure but a person with epilepsy has more than one seizure.



People of all ages - babies, girls and boys, teenagers, parents, grandparents - have epilepsy.



Most people with epilepsy have their seizures controlled with seizure medication.



Famous people like Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Joan of Arc, and Isaac Newton had epilepsy.



Did You Know?



Epilepsy and the Brain

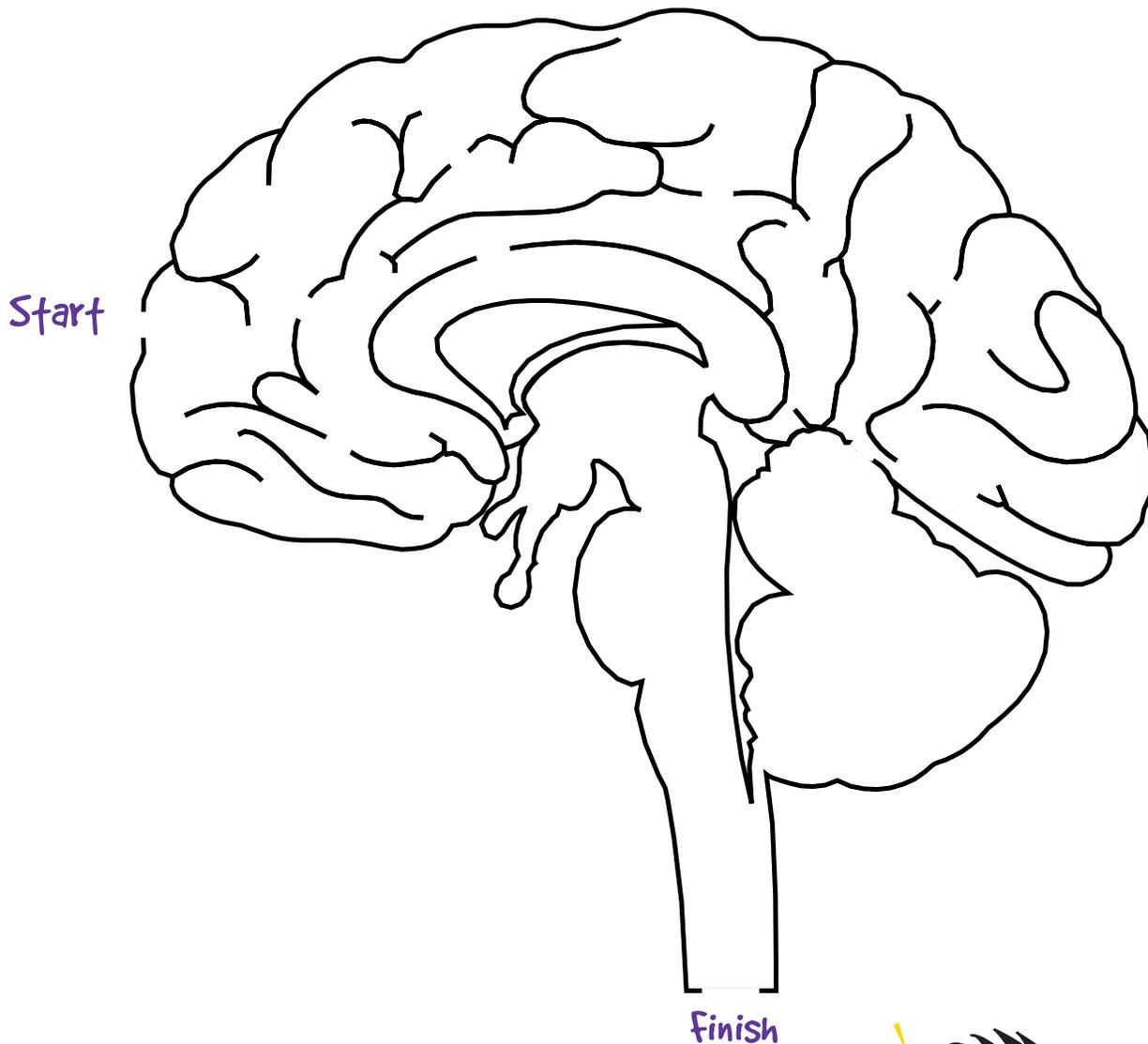
Your brain is made up of billions of tiny nerve cells. These cells send messages to each other and to other parts of your body. Nerve cells in different areas of the brain control different parts of the body. For example, some nerve cells send messages to the arms or legs. Others control hearing and seeing.

Your brain sends the message for your foot to kick the ball when you are playing soccer, for your hand to go up when you want to answer a question in school, and for you to smile when you meet a friend.

If you have epilepsy, the nerve cells sometimes become too active and they send messages that you don't want. When this happens, you have a seizure.

Having a seizure is a bit like getting confused in a maze. Once in a while, the nerve cells in your brain become a bit confused or too active for a brief moment and send the wrong message to other parts of your body. Most of the time, however, your brain sends the messages you want.

Help the nerve cells in the brain find a path to send messages to other parts of the body.



"A seizure happens when the nerve cells in the brain send out a mixed up message."



Seizures

There are many types of seizures. During a seizure a person might stare into space, blink his or her eyes quickly, feel afraid or dizzy, or fall down and shake.

A seizure is a bit like a sneeze. You can't often stop it from happening but usually it only lasts for a few seconds or minutes and it doesn't hurt you or anyone else.

Read Tim's story to find out more about the different types of seizures and then use the highlighted words in the story to fill in the crossword puzzle on the next page.

Tim's Story

It's 3:30 and Sarah and Evan are heading home after school. Sarah and Evan are in the same Grade 5 class at Westgrove Elementary School and live next door to each other. Sarah loves being with Evan. He is always friendly and is full of fun ideas about what to do after school and on the weekends. He's always knocking on her door with his best friend Tim and asking if she can go biking, set up a lemonade stand, play basketball in the driveway, or go to a movie with his Mom.

Today it's Friday and usually Evan would be full of ideas about the weekend. But today he's quiet. Sarah decides that he must be thinking hard about something.

About halfway home, Evan asks her, "Have you noticed how Tim seems to be getting forgetful and how he sometimes doesn't remember what the teacher has said?"

"Yes, I have," agrees Sarah, "and Mr. Denton was really frustrated with him this morning when Tim couldn't even remember the question he was being asked."

"I know," says Evan. "But Tim has always been interested in school. I don't understand it. Sometimes when he's talking to me he just loses interest and stares off into space for a few seconds. Then he continues his sentence. It's as if he doesn't even know that it is happening. I'm worried about him."

"Where was Tim this afternoon?" asks Sarah.

"He had another appointment with the **neurologist**," explains Evan. "He told me that a neurologist is a doctor who knows a lot about the brain. Tim is coming over right after his appointment so that we can go mini-golfing. Do you want to come?"

"Sure, if it's o.k. with my Mom," answers Sarah as they hear their names called from behind them.

"How was your doctor's appointment?" asks Evan as Tim runs up.

"Well, the doctor told me today that I have **epilepsy**," explains Tim. "Now I know why I keep blanking out for a few seconds and don't hear everything the teacher and others say to me. I'm so glad that I understand what was causing that to happen. The doctor says that I have **absence** seizures. They can happen many times a day and an absence seizure causes a person to stare blankly for a few seconds. After a few seconds, the person returns to normal. Most seizures can be controlled with seizure **medicine** so my Dad is getting my prescription filled tonight."

"I have an aunt who has epilepsy," says Sarah, "but when she has a seizure she has a **convulsion** and falls to the ground and shakes. My aunt calls it a **tonic clonic** seizure. She is often **tired** after her seizures and wants to sleep."

"The doctor says that there are many types of seizures," says Tim. "Some are called **partial** seizures and involve one part of the brain. A partial seizure can be an unusual sensation, feeling, or movement called an **aura**. My absence seizures are called generalized seizures because they involve my whole brain."

"I'm sure glad that you found out what was causing you to blank out like that," says Evan.

"So am I," agrees Tim. "My doctor says that **teaching** others about epilepsy will help them to understand too. Hey, let's get on with the weekend. Can you come mini-golfing with us Sarah?"



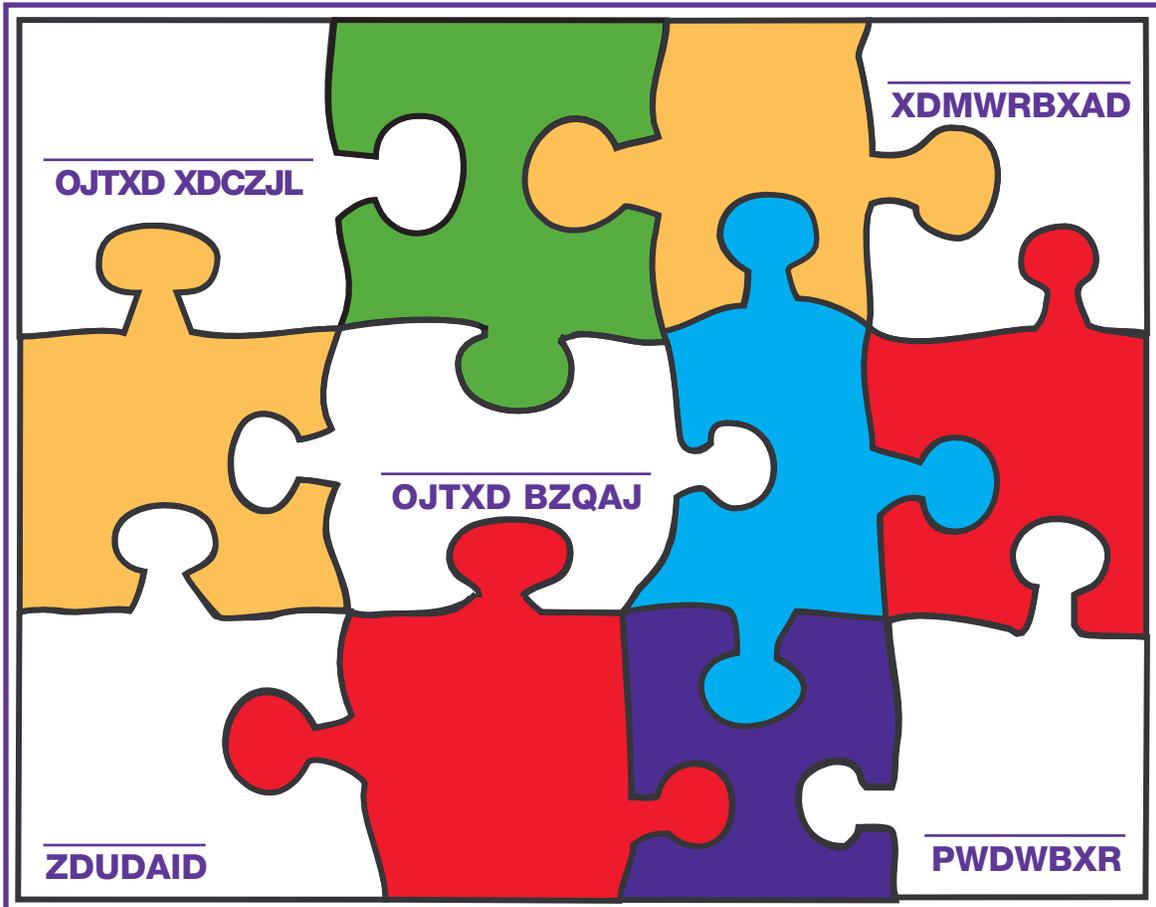
"The type of seizure you have depends on where in the brain the nerve cells are too active."

What Causes Seizures?

People of all ages around the world have epilepsy. Epilepsy isn't a disease that you can catch from someone else. It is a condition that results in a person having seizures.

Seizures are caused by a number of things. Sometimes a cause for seizures cannot be found.

Can you unscramble the code and complete the puzzle to find out some of the reasons why people have seizures?



A = O	E = Z	I = W	M = F	Q = M	U = K	Y = P
B = T	F = H	J = R	N = D	R = C	V = L	Z = U
C = J	G = Q	K = X	O = B	S = V	W = E	
D = N	H = S	L = Y	P = G	T = A	X = I	



"You can't catch epilepsy from someone."

Avoiding Seizures

For people with epilepsy, certain things are known to increase the risk of having **seizures**. These are called seizure **triggers**.

When people know that something could result in a seizure, they can try to avoid it. For instance, if a person with **epilepsy** doesn't get enough sleep, then he or she is more likely to have a seizure.

It is important for people with epilepsy to:

- Always take their seizure **medication** as prescribed.
- Get enough **sleep**.
- Not miss **meals**.
- Avoid situations that cause too much **stress**.
- Avoid flickering **lights** from computers or television if they have a certain type of epilepsy known as **photosensitive** epilepsy.

Can you find the highlighted words in the word search below? Words can be found printed up, down, diagonally, across, and even backwards in the puzzle.

M	S	S	E	R	T	S	L	N	S	Q	V	N	F	L	K	J
S	A	T	Y	I	R	E	H	P	W	O	T	Z	U	T	S	E
V	L	T	S	E	I	Z	U	R	E	S	H	S	N	T	T	H
E	P	A	P	M	G	W	M	K	J	C	B	G	H	U	X	N
F	W	N	E	E	G	U	O	E	H	C	L	G	J	I	I	E
D	V	E	L	M	E	D	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	A	R	S
L	T	P	I	J	R	L	M	S	R	L	N	B	R	X	C	Z
R	Y	U	P	L	S	K	S	F	J	E	S	B	H	A	J	D
S	Z	X	E	V	I	T	I	S	N	E	S	O	T	O	H	P

"It is very important for people with epilepsy to take their seizure medication and to get enough sleep."



Activities

People with epilepsy can participate in almost all sports and activities and can have fun just like their friends.

Circle some of the things that will make activities safer for those with seizures in the picture below.



"Having epilepsy doesn't stop you from having fun just like your friends."

Being a Friend

Just like snowflakes, each person in the world is different. That's what makes meeting people and making new friends so much fun. Friends accept and love each other for who they are. Friends accept the differences.

If you have epilepsy, then talking to your friends about your seizures will help them to understand and not to be afraid if you have one. It will also help them to know what to do if you have a seizure when you are with them.

Anyone can have a seizure but having epilepsy means that you have had more than one seizure.

Some children have conditions like food allergies or asthma that may require medication or extra caution too. Asking them about their condition will give them the chance to explain what to do if they need help.



Connect the dots to help the children in the picture show how special it is to have friends.

"Sometimes a seizure can look scary if the person falls down and shakes. Once you understand that a seizure is something the body needs to do and that it will soon be over, you don't have to be afraid."

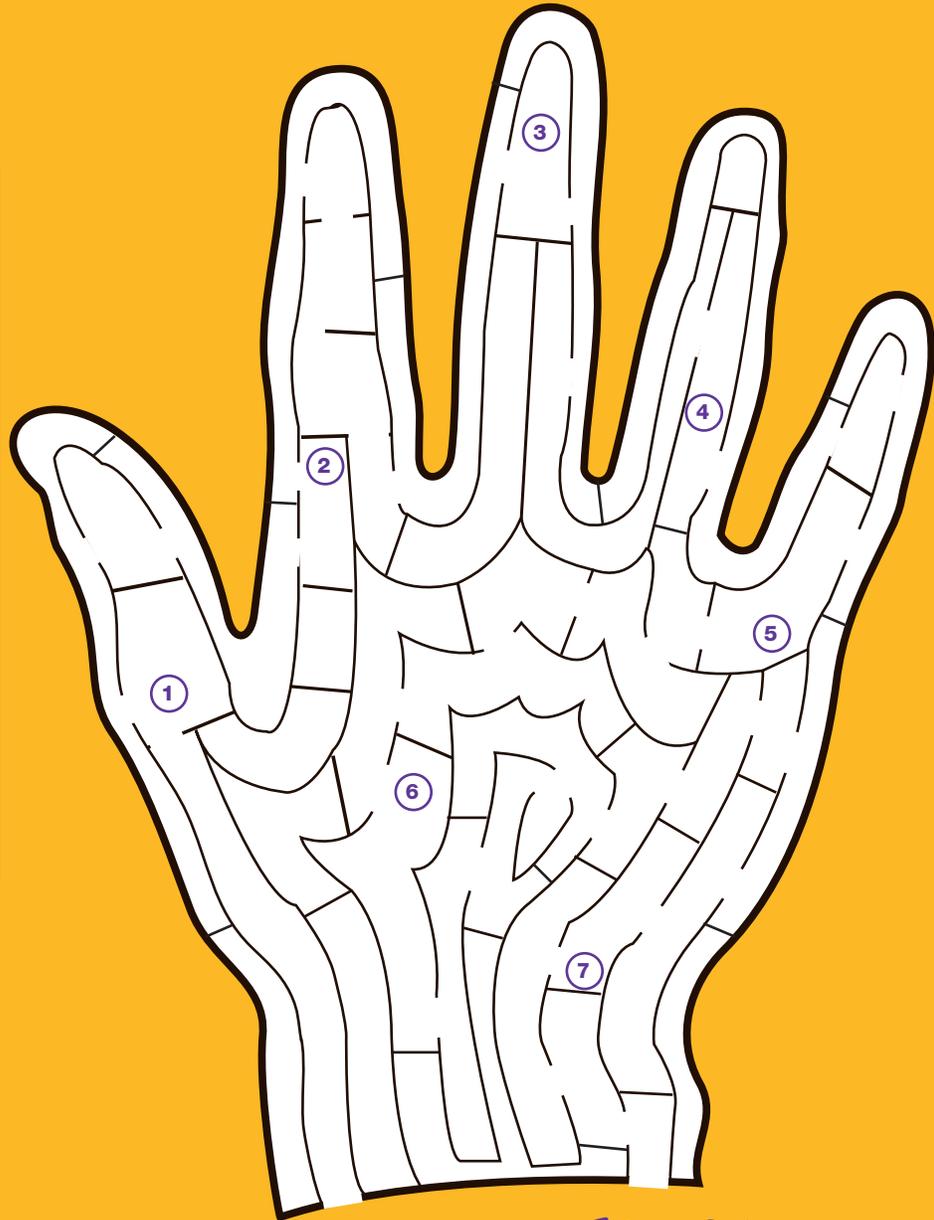


Be a Helping Hand

There are some things that you can do to help a person who is having a seizure. Most seizures last only a few seconds or minutes. Sometimes a person is a bit tired or confused after having a seizure.

Complete the maze below to learn what you can do to help a person who is having a seizure.

1. Stay calm.
2. Move hard or sharp objects out of the way.
3. Do not hold the person down.
4. Do not put anything in the person's mouth.
5. If the person falls and is shaking on the ground, gently roll the person onto his or her side as the convulsion subsides.
6. Send for an adult.
7. Stay with the person.



Seizure Starts

Seizure Ends



"A person who is having a seizure cannot swallow his or her tongue. Never put anything in a person's mouth during a seizure."



March 26th every year is Purple Day For Epilepsy around the World. Purple Day was founded right here in Canada by Cassidy Megan, from the Province of Nova Scotia, when she was only 9 years old.

Join us in wearing purple to promote Epilepsy Awareness. You can also help organize a Purple Day Event at your school.

www.purpleday.org

Enjoy the World Around You

Everyone is different. Just like snowflakes, flowers, and fingerprints, no two people are the same but every person is wonderful.

In the space below, draw someone or something wonderful that makes you smile.



