



Lillian Koontz, MPA, REHS
Health Director

Davidson County Health Department

Michael Garrison, MD
Medical Director



Rebecca Daley, RN, MHA
Chair, Board of Health

THE PUBLIC PULSE **“Your Health Department Working For You”**

Contact: Jen Hames
336-242-2354

Date: July 13, 2017
For Release: Immediately

EPILEPSY AWARENESS

The Davidson County Health Department is working with Epilepsy of Davidson County to increase awareness about epilepsy and other seizure disorders that may cause emotional or intellectual challenges. The mission of Epilepsy of Davidson County is to educate the community and be a resource for family members, educators and medical professionals. Epilepsy of Davidson County wants to provide family resources, raise epilepsy awareness, promote patient safety and improve the quality of life for children and families living with epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that affects the nervous system and causes a tendency for recurrent seizures. Seizures can be classified as uncontrolled activity that can lead to shaking, loss of consciousness and stiffness, during which the person is not aware of what is happening. Epilepsy is diagnosed after a person has had at least two or more seizures that were not directly caused by a known medical condition, such as low blood sugar or alcohol withdrawal. Epilepsy is also known as a seizure disorder.

There are many facts that individuals need to know about people who have epilepsy or seizure disorders:

- There are many types of seizures that all look different
 - Some seizures may cause a person to shake uncontrollably and others may be a brief staring spell or jerk. It is important to recognize different seizures to understand how to help someone who is having a seizure.
- Many seizure disorders are also known as epilepsy.
- Epilepsy is the tendency of the brain to produce sudden bursts of energy that disrupt other brain functions.
- Epilepsy affects women and men of all ages, races and ethnic groups.
- Epilepsy is far more common than people realize.
 - Epilepsy affects an estimated 2.3 million people in the United States.
 - One in twenty-six children and one in one hundred adults have epilepsy.
- Any one of us, at any age, at any time, can develop epilepsy.
- Seizures have many different causes:
 - Head trauma
 - Infection
 - Stroke
 - Brain problems
 - Heredity

Seizures come from the brain and any brain can have a seizure at any time with no explanation. People who come in contact with an individual who may have epilepsy or a seizure disorder should know about general seizure first-aid. General seizure first-aid includes:

- Provide general care and comfort and keep the person safe
- Always stay with the person until the seizure is over

- Seizures can cause injury to a person *during* and *after* a seizure, requiring help from others
- Stay calm
 - Most seizures only last for a few minutes
- Pay attention to the length of a seizure to know when to call for help
 - If a seizure lasts longer than the person's typical episode or longer than 5 minutes, call for help right away
- Prevent injury by moving obstacles away from the person
- Do not forcibly hold the person down
- Watch and make sure the person's breathing is okay
 - If a person is lying down, roll them onto their side with their mouth pointing toward the ground to prevent saliva from blocking their airway

Most people who have epilepsy live completely normal lives, have jobs, get married and have children. One of the major concerns with people living with epilepsy is the public's lack of knowledge and understanding about their disorder.

For more information regarding epilepsy and seizure disorders and resources available, you can visit <http://www.epilepsy.com/learn/about-epilepsy-basics> or www.facebook.com/groups/110831602527408/ for the Epilepsy of Davidson County Support Group. You can also contact Toney Kincaid by email at toneykincaid@gmail.com or epilepsyofdavidsongcounty@gmail.com or by phone at 336-300-4681.

For more information about health department services, community data, or health status data, contact the Public Information Officer at the Davidson County Health Department at 336-242-2354.