



WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

A publication of the Epidemiology Unit
Ministry of Health

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Epilepsy (Part III)

This is the last of the series of three articles on Epilepsy

Staying Safe

Learning to lessen risks is a critical part of living safely with seizures. Seizures, treatments and other health problems carry risks for many people.

Driving

Every Country restricts or puts limits on driving for people with seizures.

- Know the laws where you live. Typically people need to be seizure free for a period of time. Individual circumstances and a doctor's recommendation may also contribute to driving restrictions.
- People with epilepsy also have a legal obligation to report seizures to the DMV (Department of Motor traffic & Vehicles) or indicate that they have epilepsy when applying or renewing a license. (Check your country law for your legal obligations.)
- Do not drive if you are having seizures or side effects that affect your ability to be safe on the road.
- Be honest with your doctor about your seizures. **Safety comes first!**
- Be honest with the DMV. It may protect you legally if problems occur later.

Water Safety

- A person can drown if he has a seizure in water. It doesn't take much water either - only enough to cover a person's nose so they can't breathe.
- Talk to your health care team about whether it's wise for you to swim and what precautions to take.

- Use common sense. If you do swim, use a buddy system. Wear a life jacket with any water activities.
- Make sure someone is around that knows how to swim, has lifesaving skills, and knows how to respond to seizures.
- Take showers instead of baths. If seizures are frequent or you tend to fall, use a shower chair and a flexible shower hose or sit on the bottom of an unfilled tub to shower instead of standing.

Fire safety

- If you have uncontrolled seizures, be very careful around heat or flames.
- Sit far back from open flames, such as a campfire.
- Electric stoves may be safer than gas (due to flames). Using a microwave is even better!
- Cook on the back burner - you are less likely to lean on the burner or spill hot foods on yourself or others during a seizure.
- Put guards on open fireplaces, wood stoves or radiators.
- Don't smoke or use matches when you're alone. A fire could start if you drop it during a seizure.

Safety Proof Your Environment

- Arrange your home and if possible, work or study space, to be safe should you have a seizure. For example, pad sharp corners, use non-slip carpet, avoid scatter rugs, put barriers in front of fireplaces or hot stoves.
- If you wander or are confused during or after a seizure;

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- Pay special attention to heights, railings and nearby pools or bodies of water.
- Shut your door when you are home alone, so you don't wander outside or into dangerous areas.
- Make sure someone else (neighbour, friend) has a key to get in and check on you.
- If you fall during seizures, 'fall-proof' your home and other areas. Put in carpets, cover sharp corners, and avoid glass tables.
- Some people with frequent falls may need to consider wearing a protective helmet.

Climbing Heights

- If your seizures are not in control, avoid working on ladders or unprotected heights, especially if you are alone.
- A safety harness could be an acceptable safety aid, depending on the type of seizures and activity.
- If you have frequent seizures or fall during seizures, avoid climbing stairs when alone.
- Keep common household items on all floors of your home to avoid going up and down stairs frequently.

Equipment and Power Tools

- Use safety guards on equipment for cutting, chopping and drilling. Avoid using these if your seizures aren't controlled.
- Make sure all equipment (such as lawn mowers) if possible, has automatic stop switches.
- Use common sense and protective gear, just like anyone should with power tools.

Recreation

If having a seizure during a recreational activity could lead to injury or harm, avoid the activity. Use common sense. Talk with your medical team for individual advice and precautions.

Activities at low-risk of injury can be done by most people with seizures, even if the seizures are not in control. However, exercising or participating in activities with someone else is always a good idea. That way someone is with you in case help is needed.

- For 'medium-risk' activities, the longer a person is seizure free, the easier it will be to assess what risks these activities may pose. The type of seizures a person has is also important to consider.
- Some people may recommend against contact sports (such as football, hockey) or others such as bike racing, gymnastics, horseback riding and boating.
- For others, these activities may be fine as long as appropriate protective gear is worn and if the person has been seizure free for at least a few months. The length of time without seizures should be agreed upon with your health care

team.

- A person should be seizure free for more than a year to perform high-risk activities, although some doctors recommend never engaging in high-risk recreational activities if you have epilepsy.
- Ask your medical team what is safe for you to do. Some may be safer than others.

Child Care Safety

- Baby proof the house early.
- If you have uncontrolled seizures, think about the best way to carry your child. Your type of seizures will affect this. For example, women who fall forward should avoid carrying their child in their arms on in a sling frequently when they are alone.
- Use a small stroller to carry a baby around the house or outside.
- Change the baby on the floor.
- Do not bathe the baby in a tub when you are alone. Make this family time and share the job!
- Feed an infant sitting in the middle of the bed or couch to support the baby more easily.
- Have an enclosed safe play area.

Medication Side Effects

- Know the main side effects of your seizure medicines. Your health care provider is the best source for individual information. Also you can learn them from the product leaflet of some medication.
- Be especially careful if you take a medicine that can affect your balance, coordination, walking or vision. These problems can cause people to fall or injure themselves.
- Be aware that some side effects occur from interactions between your seizure medicines or with other ones you take. Any medicine, even over-the-counter and herbal products or supplements can cause problems. Some foods (for example grapefruit juice) can affect medicine levels and lead to too much medicine in the blood.

Develop a Seizure Safety Plan

- Plan ahead for what you and family should do during a seizure. Create your own "Seizure Response Plan" so others know what to do if you have a seizure and how to prevent emergencies.
- Make sure everyone knows seizure first aid!

Sources

<http://www.epilepsy.com/get-help/staying-safe>

Compiled by Dr. C U D Gunasekara of the Epidemiology Unit

Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 29th - 05th Dec 2014 (49th Week)

RDHS Division	Dengue Fever		Dysentery		Encephalitis		Enteric Fever		Food Poisoning		Leptospirosis		Typhus Fever		Viral Hepatitis		Human Rabies		Chickenpox		Meningitis		Leishmaniasis		WRCD	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	T*	C**
Colombo	320	13599	4	156	0	13	4	116	0	218	5	211	0	3	1	59	0	0	7	400	1	61	0	3	81	19
Gampaha	117	7896	0	136	0	11	1	38	0	31	1	437	0	23	0	252	0	5	2	271	1	72	0	3	33	67
Kalutara	36	2471	2	154	0	11	1	58	0	81	3	336	0	4	0	23	0	1	3	248	0	72	0	0	77	23
Kandy	114	2052	1	92	0	7	8	37	0	20	5	70	1	82	8	210	0	1	6	186	0	29	0	5	100	0
Matale	22	562	3	76	0	3	0	19	0	19	0	42	1	4	1	138	0	1	1	51	0	49	0	32	62	38
Nuwaraweliya	9	286	8	277	0	3	0	20	0	70	2	31	0	57	2	41	0	0	3	129	1	45	0	0	77	23
Galle	13	1087	0	117	0	7	0	9	0	33	8	216	3	108	0	13	0	1	1	398	1	55	0	3	70	30
Hambantota	16	628	2	65	2	7	0	11	0	16	2	87	0	70	1	19	0	0	0	142	0	39	8	365	92	8
Matara	20	698	1	97	0	4	0	23	0	20	10	116	6	68	1	55	0	0	1	180	0	36	0	84	100	0
Jaffna	93	1507	41	923	0	8	8	277	0	73	0	14	30	363	1	18	0	0	0	132	1	57	0	1	83	17
Kilinochchi	1	72	0	130	0	3	0	29	0	0	0	1	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	6	0	11	25	75
Mannar	22	297	4	67	0	10	0	37	0	9	0	4	0	24	0	3	0	0	0	11	0	8	0	5	100	0
Vavuniya	3	129	11	110	0	2	3	70	3	32	0	9	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	12	0	19	0	6	75	25
Mullaitivu	10	117	0	75	0	0	0	14	0	26	0	9	0	12	0	0	0	2	0	5	0	6	0	7	40	60
Batticaloa	39	833	13	367	0	3	0	38	0	33	0	17	0	2	0	7	0	1	0	61	0	8	0	0	79	21
Ampara	3	155	3	82	0	1	0	4	0	18	2	21	0	13	0	5	0	0	0	125	0	10	0	12	86	14
Trincomalee	22	604	5	75	0	1	0	6	1	12	0	20	1	23	0	2	0	0	0	104	1	18	1	9	83	17
Kurunegala	78	2263	3	150	1	27	0	22	0	32	8	139	0	47	0	68	0	1	9	399	0	76	1	145	93	7
Puttalam	29	782	4	83	0	3	1	15	0	11	0	60	0	25	0	6	0	3	2	83	1	32	0	9	62	38
Anuradhapura	14	536	13	263	0	5	0	4	0	60	6	120	0	31	0	18	0	1	0	214	0	54	1	398	63	37
Polonnaruwa	15	526	1	68	0	5	0	7	0	2	2	68	0	8	1	11	0	0	2	153	0	26	7	140	71	29
Badulla	51	933	2	200	0	9	2	16	0	15	0	54	0	113	1	154	0	0	4	94	0	127	0	1	82	18
Monaragala	2	294	5	108	0	4	0	8	0	33	2	76	2	155	1	120	0	2	2	89	0	21	0	31	82	18
Ratnapura	11	2733	3	225	0	24	0	28	0	34	3	427	1	105	4	453	0	1	1	182	0	47	0	33	67	33
Kegalle	10	1595	0	99	0	10	0	50	0	34	1	277	1	60	1	256	0	0	0	248	0	73	0	2	36	64
Kalmune	34	404	3	151	0	1	0	6	3	81	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	103	0	10	0	0	38	62
SRILANKA	1104	43059	132	4346	3	182	28	962	7	1013	60	2865	46	1427	23	1937	0	20	44	4035	7	1056	18	1305	74	26

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (WRCD).

*T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 05th December, 2014 Total number of reporting units: 337 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 253 C**=Completeness

Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP

29th – 05th Dec 2014 (50th Week)

Disease	No. of Cases by Province									Number of cases during current week in 2014	Number of cases during same week in 2013	Total number of cases to date in 2014	Total number of cases to date in 2013	Difference between the number of cases to date in 2013 & 2014
	W	C	S	N	E	NW	NC	U	Sab					
AFP*	01	01	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	03	03	80	100	-20%
Diphtheria	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	-	00	-	%
Mumps	01	03	00	00	00	01	02	00	00	07	11	632	1436	-56.1%
Measles	03	00	03	00	01	02	02	00	00	11	48	3043	3823	-20.4%
Rubella	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	17	27	-37.1%
CRS**	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	04	06	-33.3%
Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	14	24	-41.7%
Neonatal Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	-	00	-	%
Japanese Encephalitis	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	22	68	-67.7%
Whooping Cough	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	78	84	-7.2%
Tuberculosis	93	20	12	10	02	04	04	07	05	157	248	9178	7896	+16.3%

Key to Table 1 & 2

Provinces: W: Western, C: Central, S: Southern, N: North, E: East, NC: North Central, NW: North Western, U: Uva, Sab: Sabaragamuwa.
 RDHS Divisions: CB: Colombo, GM: Gampaha, KL: Kalutara, KD: Kandy, ML: Matale, NE: Nuwara Eliya, GL: Galle, HB: Hambantota, MT: Matara, JF: Jaffna, KN: Killinochchi, MN: Mannar, VA: Vavuniya, MU: Mullaitivu, BT: Batticaloa, AM: Ampara, TR: Trincomalee, KM: Kalmunai, KR: Kurunegala, PU: Puttalam, AP: Anuradhapura, PO: Polonnaruwa, BD: Badulla, MO: Moneragala, RP: Ratnapura, KG: Kegalle.

Data Sources: Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases: Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Neonatal Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps., Rubella, CRS, Special Surveillance: AFP* (Acute Flaccid Paralysis), Japanese Encephalitis
 CRS** =Congenital Rubella Syndrome
 AFP and all clinically confirmed Vaccine Preventable Diseases except Tuberculosis and Mumps should be investigated by the MOH

Dengue Prevention and Control Health Messages

Look for plants such as bamboo, bohemia, rampe and banana in your surroundings and maintain them

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ON STATE SERVICE

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