

Anti-Epileptic Drugs (AEDs)

General information regarding anti-seizure medications for family and friends

Anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) prevent epileptic seizures occurring. There are a number of these medications available for children with seizures. Each one works in its own individual way, to prevent seizures occurring. The medication, taken orally, is absorbed through the tummy into the blood stream and circulated to the brain where it begins to take effect.

Make sure you give the AEDs correctly

AEDs are very effective in controlling seizures provided they are given correctly.

- Ensure your child receives the right amount every day.
- The amount should not be altered unless instructed by your doctor.

It can be difficult to remember to take the medication every day. You can ask the pharmacist to put your child's medications in blister packs or in pill rolls. This makes it much easier to know when you have forgotten. Alternatively you can buy a pill box from a pharmacy and put a week's worth of medications in it at the beginning of the week. Putting alarms on smart phones can also be really helpful.



What to do if your child becomes unwell

When your child is unwell it is important to encourage them to still take their medication.

- If your child vomits within one hour of taking a dose of the medication then give one replacement dose.
- If your child vomits after one hour of taking that dose, then do not give it again.
- If the replacement dose is also vomited within an hour, contact your GP for advice.

Do not stop the medication suddenly as this could actually bring on a seizure.



When your child first starts taking AEDs

When your child first commences on AEDs the initial dose will be small and it will be increased to the necessary amount for total seizure control. This helps to decrease side effects sometimes experienced at the beginning of treatment. Many factors are considered when prescribing medication. These include age, weight, medical history including the frequency and severity of seizures. As your child grows, more medication may be needed.

Side Effects

AEDs, like most other medications, can have side effects. AEDs are generally well tolerated in children with no side effects. The possible side effects are specific to each particular drug. Some side effects are more common than others. Remember, when the benefits of medication controlling your child's seizures outweigh the possibility of your child experiencing side effects your doctor will recommend using AEDs. You can obtain information regarding side effects from your doctor.

There may be other common reasons for your child experiencing similar signs to some of the side effects. For example, tummy pain could be due to the treatment but it might also be a tummy bug. If your child has recently commenced a new medication and has developed symptoms please take him or her to see your family doctor.

It is not necessary to have regular blood tests for medication monitoring unless there are specific problems occurring. Your doctor will advise if and when this is necessary.

Other medications

When buying over the counter medicines, please check with the pharmacist that it is okay to use them with your child's current AED. Most over the counter medications can be taken.

It is a good idea to always inform new/after hours doctors the name of the AED that your child is on. This is helpful for them when they are prescribing other medications, for example antibiotics, for your child.

Filling your prescription

Your prescription can be taken to any pharmacy. Although your child's initial prescription was prescribed by your paediatrician or paediatric neurologist repeat prescriptions can be obtained from your family doctor.

Safety

Keep all medication in a locked cupboard out of reach of children.