



PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION

# Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP)

## What is it?

**S**udden **U**nexpected **D**eath in **E**pilepsy is when a person with epilepsy dies unexpectedly and was otherwise healthy.

The exact cause of death is unknown, but may be related to changes in heart rhythm, breathing and brain function.

## What are risk factors?

- Uncontrolled generalized tonic-clonic seizures, called convulsions.
- Seizures that happen during sleep.
- Missing doses of medicine or any aspect of your treatment plan that helps to control seizures.



Illustrations by Heba Akbari, MD

## What can I do?

- Talk with your providers about the risk of SUDEP, and how you can reduce the risk.
- Take your seizure medicine regularly and as prescribed. Take the right dose at the right time.
- Follow all other treatment or lifestyle plans to improve seizure control. This may include avoiding known seizure triggers, getting enough sleep, and avoiding alcohol and drugs.
- Talk to your provider about a seizure alert/detection device.
- Learn Seizure First Aid.
- Identify people who live with you or nearby and can help during or right after a seizure.

## Where can I get more information?



**Advancing Awareness of Epilepsy & SUDEP.**

Learn more about seizure first aid and devices at <https://www.dannydid.org/>



Learn more about seizure first aid, programs, support services and case management at <https://epilepsy-chicago.org/>

*The information included in this document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute in any way for medical education, training, treatment, advice, or diagnosis by a healthcare professional. A qualified healthcare professional should always be consulted before making any healthcare-related decision.*