

HEADS UP FOR VETS!

Traumatic Brain Injury and Epilepsy

WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

Epilepsy is a disorder in which brain cells (neurons) misfire producing sudden, unpredictable, excessive pulses of electrical energy in the brain which cause seizures to happen.

WHAT IS A SEIZURE?

A seizure is a temporary disruption of the electrical function of the brain that can affect the whole brain and cause unconsciousness, or can affect only part of the brain and may or may not disrupt consciousness. Seizures produce changes in behavior and/or movement.

WHAT CAN A SEIZURE LOOK LIKE?

A convulsion...stiffening or twitching of a part of the body...repeated movements that look unnatural...a sudden fall...rapid eye blinking...picking up objects or picking at clothing for no apparent reason...repeated chewing or lip-smacking...muttering or repeating words or phrases that don't make sense...wandering around in a confused way...making strange movements such as kicking or cycling....body jerks...daydreaming.

WHAT CAN A SEIZURE FEEL LIKE?

A "rising feeling" in the stomach...déjà vu...getting an unusual taste in your mouth or a smell....a sudden intense feeling of fear, happiness or sadness...a feeling of numbness (tingling)...visual disturbances...hallucinations.

FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY, WHAT IS MY RISK OF DEVELOPING EPILEPSY & SEIZURES?

Anyone who has had a brain injury is at risk.

Studies suggest Traumatic Brain Injury may result in an increased risk of developing epilepsy and seizures.



In collaboration with the
Department of Veterans Affairs'
Epilepsy Centers of Excellence