

Epilepsy and driving in _____

Name of State

One of the most uncomfortable discussions that doctors and nurses have with patients with epilepsy involve restrictions on driving, because your driver's license may seem essential to your independence. Although most state laws about driving and epilepsy are now less restrictive than they were many years ago, these laws were written to lessen the chance of harm to yourself or others resulting from you having a seizure while driving.

Therefore, every state regulates driver's license eligibility for people with epilepsy. As a driver's license holder, it is your responsibility to know the regulations in your state. The most common requirement is that you must be seizure-free for a certain period of time before you can be allowed to drive. The seizure-free period varies from state to state. Some states do not specify a set seizure-free period. Instead, they ask for your doctor's recommendation about whether you can drive safely.

Although physicians can offer an opinion on your ability to drive safely, the department of motor vehicles makes the final decision. In some states, the physician can offer such an opinion if your seizures do not interfere with consciousness or control of movement, you may be able to continue driving, if your seizures occur only at certain times (especially during sleep) or if you always have an aura that would warn you to pull off the road before a seizure begins. In a few states, some people with seizures can get a restricted license, which allows them to drive under certain conditions.

If you are still having seizures, don't hide it from your doctor in order to keep your driver's license. Not reporting seizures makes it impossible for your doctor to treat your epilepsy effectively. The doctor may be able to prevent more seizures from occurring by making a small change in the dosage of your seizure medicine, for instance, but that won't happen if the doctor doesn't know that it's necessary. Inadequate treatment may lead to more seizures and then you or someone else may be injured.

If your seizures make it unsafe for you to drive, you will need to find other means of transportation. Public transportation, carpooling, van transportation, and even bicycle riding can be used to preserve your sense of independence while keeping you and others safe. Remember that restrictions do not always last a lifetime. They may be temporary, just until your seizures are under good control.

If your seizures are well controlled, use your driving privileges as a reason to take good care of yourself. If you always take your seizure medicines as prescribed, get enough sleep, limit your alcohol consumption, and visit your doctor regularly, you will be more likely to be able to continue driving safely and legally.

Below is a table outlining the driving laws in your state, which your doctor will complete. Once you have read this form, the table has been completed by your doctor and you have discussed this information with your doctor please sign below.

This state, _____, requires that: ____ You must be free of seizures for _____ months. ____ Your doctor must submit a statement concerning your ability to drive safely. ____ You must report your seizures to the state department of motor vehicles. ____ Your doctor must report your seizures to the state department of motor vehicles.

I have discussed this information with Dr. _____ and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Patient

Date

For more information on the requirements for driving in every state please visit http://www.epilepsy.com/epilepsy/rights_driving.html