

EPILEPSY

Discussion

Work in small groups and discuss these questions.

1. Do you know what epilepsy is? If you are not sure, find out from one of your classmates or check in your dictionary.
2. Do you know anybody who suffers from epilepsy?
3. Have you ever seen anybody having an epileptic seizure? If you have what was your reaction? Were you scared ? Did you panic?
4. Do you know what you should do if somebody has an epileptic seizure?

Look at these dos and don'ts for First Aid in the event of an epileptic seizure.

Work in small groups and mark them **R** if you think they are right or **W** if you think they are wrong. If you are not sure mark them **(NS)**

During the attack

1. Try to put the person in a comfortable position.
2. Try to wake the person.
3. Do not put anything in their mouth.
4. Do not move the person unless they are in a dangerous place.
5. Keep other people away.
6. Call an ambulance.

At the end of the attack

1. Stay with the person until you are sure they can get home safely.
2. Give them something to drink as quickly as possible.
3. Slap them gently on the face to help them come round more quickly.
4. If they remain blue at the end of the seizure, put your fingers under their jaw and lift it forward.
5. Put your fingers in their mouth to check that they haven't swallowed their tongue.
6. Give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if they are still not breathing

Now look at the memo on the next page from Donna Gorman, the General Manager of IILT to staff explaining what do if somebody in the school has an epileptic seizure.

Were you right about what to do and what not to do?

Language Focus

Look back at the memo and underline all the verbs that are giving instructions. What is this form of the verb called? Can you think of any other structure you could use instead?

FIRST AID IN THE EVENT OF AN EPILEPTIC SEIZURE

At the start of the attack the person may cry out, usually stiffens and then falls:

Their arms and legs may jerk or twitch. You will not be able to rouse them (and do not try). Seizures mostly last a few minutes, but can sometimes go on for much longer. During the seizure the person will often go blue in the face. There is nothing you can do about this until the attack is over.

During the Convulsive Seizure DO NOTHING except:

1. Make the person comfortable lying down, put something soft under their head if you can. Only move the person, if they are in a dangerous place like on the road or by a fire.

2. Keep other people away.

DO NOT - put anything into their mouth.

DO NOT - try to rouse the person.

At the end of an attack:

Twitching will stop: the person usually takes a deep breath, the blue colour goes and they slowly wake up. The person is often muddled and will not know where they are for a short while afterwards. They may well be wet and soiled.

DO - stay with the person: talk to them quietly until you are certain that they can find their way home.

DO NOT - try to wake the person up; let them come to in their own time.

DO NOT - give them anything to drink until you are sure that they are fully awake

DO NOT - send for an ambulance unless one seizure runs into another, or if the person does not wake up after 5 minutes (they may be carrying a card which tells you how long they take to wake up), or if they are having trouble breathing or if they are injured.

If at the end of the seizure they remain blue, or are struggling for a breath:

1. Put your fingers under the angles of their jaw and lift it forward.
2. Put your fingers gently into their mouth and check that their dentures or tongue are not blocking the back of their throat. (Do not do this while they are having a seizure).
3. Roll the person onto their side with chin lifted up.
4. Do mouth to mouth resuscitation if the above steps have not worked.

No Need to call an Ambulance:

If medical I.D. jewellery or cards says "epilepsy" - and

If the seizure ends in under 5 minutes - and

If consciousness returns without further incident - and

If there are no signs of injury, physical distress or pregnancy.

Writing

Work in small groups to write a list of **Dos** and **Don'ts** for these situations

- A young child who is choking
- A bad cold
- An adult with first degree burns

Part 2

Reading

Read this internet article quickly about a DJ who has epilepsy. You cannot look up more than **FIVE** words.

Top DJ discusses life with epilepsy

by Deborah Condon

Epilepsy affects around 40,000 people in Ireland, making it a fairly common condition. Yet stigma and in some cases, fear and embarrassment, still surround it. Often, those affected worry that they will not be able to lead a 'normal' life. To help change people's attitudes, top 2 FM DJ, Rick O'Shea, who himself suffers from epilepsy, offered to help the Irish Epilepsy Association, Brainwave by speaking in public about his personal experiences.

"I was 16 when I had my first seizure. It was Christmas Day. I was playing a board game with my brother when I stood up, got a funny look on my face and fell down, taking the tree with me", says Rick, who is now in his 30s.

The next thing he remembered was waking up in an ambulance on the way to St. James's Hospital. After the second or third seizure, the neurologist diagnosed Rick with epilepsy, something he says that terrified him and his family.

I was terrified of how it would affect the rest of my life. Was it going to change everything? But I decided it wasn't. You have to make decisions as if you do not have epilepsy. "You can only deal with seizures when you get them", he says.

After his diagnosis and for the rest of his teens, Rick had seizures every six months to a year. During his 20s, he experienced a seizure-free period of six or seven years. However for the last few years he has been having a seizure every 18 - 24 months.

"My last seizure was in October 2004. Some people have every specific triggers, such as strobe lighting or stress. However I've had loads of tests done and doctors cannot find what triggers it", he explains.

Rick has been on anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) 'pretty much ever since' he was diagnosed. When he was 19 or 20, doctors tried taking him off the drugs, but this did not work. He knows medication may not suit everybody, but he is 'happy to take them' if they help him remain seizure free.

Rick has always been open about the fact that he has epilepsy. When he went back to school after his diagnosis, the school principal was obviously told, but Rick also told his friends and his friends at university also knew.

Rick currently hosts the weeknight 10pm to midnight slot on 2FM. His employers are very understanding but luckily, so far, he has only had one seizure in work. He admits that it might be more difficult for somebody with epilepsy in a 9 to 5 job.

He has an eight-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter. He has thought about whether they will develop epilepsy. Some studies have suggested a hereditary link but there is no definite evidence that this is the case.

One thing that has been affected by epilepsy is driving. A person has to be seizure free for 12 months before they will be allowed to drive a vehicle after which a neurologist must certify that the person can drive. Rick has had to give up driving a number of times and is still on his provisional licence

Rick's advice to anybody with epilepsy is to be open and honest about the condition and to use the resources offered by brainwave. To everybody else he says 'be as understanding and positive about epilepsy as you can'.

Adapted from <http://www.irishhealth.com>

Checking Understanding

How many of these questions can you answer without looking back at the article? When you've answered as many as you can, compare your answers with the rest of your group.

1. What is the Irish Epilepsy Association called?
2. How old was Rick when he had his first seizure?
3. Where was he when it happened and what was he doing?
4. Where was he when he came around?
5. What was his family's reaction when he was diagnosed with epilepsy?
6. How old is Rick now and how often does he have seizures these days?
7. What triggers Rick's seizures?
8. How does he feel about taking medication?
9. Is epilepsy a hereditary disease?
10. What advice does Rick give to his fellow sufferers?
11. What advice does he give to everybody else?

What do you think?

Do you think it is a good thing if well-known people like actors, singers and sports stars, who suffer from medical conditions like epilepsy or cancer talk about them in public? Can you think of any famous people who help to raise awareness and money for different medical causes?

Language Focus

Prepositions

Complete the following sentences with a suitable preposition, then check back in the article.

1. My father suffers _____ very bad migraines.
2. My next- door neighbour is _____ her 80s. She's very independent for her age.
3. Mary's very upset. Her father's just been diagnosed _____ bowel cancer
4. He slipped on the pavement _____ the way to work and cut his knee.
5. Nurses and doctors who work in A&E on a Saturday night often have to deal _____ people who are violent and aggressive.
6. I can't drink alcohol at the moment because I'm _____ antibiotics.
7. The doctors decided to take the patient _____ all medication to see how she would cope

Tenses

Look at these sentences from the article.

1. "After his diagnosis and for the rest of his teens, Rick *had* a seizure every six months to a year"
2. "His employers are very understanding but luckily, so far, he *has only had* one seizure in work".

In both sentences the writer uses the verb "Have". Which tense is the first sentence? Which tense is the second? Can you explain why she uses each tense?

Now look at this sentence.

3. "However for the last few years he *has been having* a seizure every 18-24 months."

Again the writer is using the verb "Have". What tense is she using this time?

Look at this table of contents from a self-study grammar reference book (Raymond Murphy *English Grammar in Use* CUP Third Edition) . Which page should you look at to find out more information about this tense?.

How is this tense formed?

_____ + _____ + _____

All the rules for when we use this tense are quite complicated but it is very useful to say how long we have been doing things.

For example

I have been living in Dublin for 7 years and I have been teaching in IILT since November 2005.

What about you? Can you write two **true** sentences about you using this tense?

Notice how we can use **since** and **for** with the present perfect continuous.

Look at the two example sentences and see if you can work out when we use "since" and when we use "for"

Part 3

Who's who in the medical world?

Look at the list of medical consultants in St. John's Private clinic. Which specialist would Rick go to see? _____

Who would your GP refer you to if you needed specialist treatment for the following medical conditions?

1. acne or eczema _____

2. arthritis _____

3. asthma, bronchitis or emphysema _____

4. diarrhoea or constipation _____

5. diabetes or hormone imbalance _____

6. anaemia _____

7. blocked arteries _____

8. HIV _____

9. cancer _____

10. a skin graft _____

11. And finally, which of these specialist would a GP probably **not** refer a man to?

St. John's Private Clinic

Dr. E. Barrington	<i>Dermatologist</i>	4538218
Mr. D. Burke	<i>Maxillofacial Surgeon</i>	4742408
Dr. C. Byrand	<i>STD Specialist</i>	4156703
Ms. U. Carmody	<i>Orthopaedic Surgeon</i>	4154432
Mr. T. Conroy	<i>Gen. Surgeon</i>	4152323
Dr. D. Davies	<i>Haematologist</i>	4147835
Dr. G. Dawes	<i>Gen. Medical</i>	4156666
Dr. J. P. Delahunty	<i>Rheumatologist</i>	4153290
Dr. B. Donesbury	<i>Cardiologist</i>	4159797
Mr. F. Drury	<i>ENT Consultant</i>	4123900
Dr. J. Duggan	<i>Plastic Surgeon</i>	4152145
Dr J. Fagan	<i>Cardiologist</i>	4153777
Prof. J. Fennell	<i>Clinical Oncology</i>	4065118
Dr. P. Finnegan	<i>Gastroenterologist</i>	4543000
Prof. D. Flanagan	<i>Gastroenterologist</i>	4548141
Dr. J. Flynn	<i>Oncologist</i>	4162196
Mr. V. Garvey	<i>Thoracic Surgeon</i>	4736001
Prof. S. Goodwin	<i>Haematologist</i>	4546333
Dr. E. Higgins	<i>Gynaecologist</i>	4723611
Ms. G. Hannifin	<i>A&E Consultant</i>	4732459
Dr. M. Irwin	<i>Nephrologist</i>	4217658
Mr. T. Kennedy	<i>Vascular Surgeon</i>	4729001
Dr. K Mulholland	<i>Endocrinologist</i>	4571234
Dr. F McGuinness	<i>Respiratory Physician</i>	4742417
Dr D. Lacey	<i>Neurologist</i>	4721669