



arc-sedgwickcounty.org/erc.html

# hotline

## How Do Seizure Medications Work?

A dose of medication will reach a peak, or maximum, level in the blood 30 minutes to 6 hours after it is taken. The time between taking the medication and reaching the peak level depends on the specific medicine, its form (liquid, tablet, capsule, slow-release form) and, in some cases, the food consumed before taking it. In general, liquids are most rapidly absorbed. Medications in slow-release forms are absorbed gradually and produce the steadiest levels in the blood, so doses can be taken fewer times per day.

A medicine's half-life is the time required for its level in the blood to be reduced by one-half. The half-life of each seizure medicine depends on how quickly it is broken down and eliminated from the body. A medicine's half-life determines how often it should be taken.

If a medicine has a short half-life, the amount in your blood may quickly become too low to control your seizures, so you will need to take another dose. Medicines with short half-lives ideally should be taken several times a day. Then you can take a smaller amount each time and your blood level will not become too high, which may produce unwanted side effects. The shorter time between doses will prevent the level from becoming too low, which may allow seizures to occur. Medicines with long half-lives, on the other hand, have more stable blood levels and can be taken less frequently.



Seizure medicines are fully effective when their blood levels have reached a steady state, or equilibrium. Someone who reaches a steady state is taking a constant amount of medication and the level in the blood is remaining fairly constant. In other words, the amount of medication the person takes and the amount that is metabolized and excreted from the body (in urine, for instance) are equal. This usually takes an amount of time equivalent to five half-lives.

Even when someone has been taking the same medication for a long time and the blood levels are in steady state, the levels will fluctuate over the course of the day. Dose-related side effects are more likely to occur at times of the highest (peak) levels and a seizure is more likely to occur at times of the lowest (trough) levels. ↪ EPILEPSY.COM

## erc family camp day

August 5, 2007 12:30 - 5:30 PM

@ Camp Hiawatha

1605 W. 51st Street N., Wichita

\*Meet other families living beyond the diagnosis of epilepsy.

## Family Fun for all!!

Games, Inflatables, Swimming, Horseback Riding, Crafts, Prizes, Frog Hop, BBQ Dinner, & More

Guest Speaker : **Kore Liow, MD**

Epileptologist, Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center

See Registration Form enclosed  
More info: (316)943-2453

Individual \$5 ■ Family \$15



## Can You Save on Seizure Medications?



### Can I switch from a brand name seizure medicine to its generic counterpart to save money?

Never make a change in your seizure medication, either in brand name or dosage, without first checking with your doctor/nurse. There is a general trend in medicine toward the use of generic medicines because they are less expensive. For seizure medicines, however, the generics are often not the same as the brand-name medicines. The major differences are not the quality of the medicine itself, but rather the way in which it is made. The manufacturing process can affect how much of the medicine is absorbed and the rate at which it is absorbed. Switching to a less expensive medicine may reduce seizure control, so it is important not to switch from a brand name to a generic seizure medicine, or from one generic manufacturer to another, without supervision by your doctor.

### What are safe ways to cut the cost of seizure medicines?

When applying for health insurance, ask if a prescription plan exists and how it works. It may be useful to compare the possible increased costs of a health care plan that includes partial or complete coverage for prescriptions to the costs of the your medicines. You also may be able to save money by comparing prices at different pharmacies. Large drug stores or chain stores often have lower prices, and some pharmacies offer discounts for the purchase of larger quantities. You also may be able to save money by using mail-order or Internet pharmacy services, or by taking advantage of programs sponsored by the manufacturers of many brand-name seizure medicines to help low-income patients afford their products. ERC can assist you with locating programs you might be eligible for.

### More money saving tips

- Ask your doctor to prescribe only one size tablet instead of two sizes. This will help you to avoid making two co-payments. However, this will only work if your doctor thinks you do not need a special size tablet to adjust your dose.
- If your tablets have a line in the center, this indicates they can be split in half. Ask your doctor to prescribe a larger size tablet that you will split to get the correct dose. For example, ask for 500 mg tablets, cut them in half and take the correct 250 mg dose. This may cut your costs almost in half because many drugs are priced by tablet instead of by size. NOTE: Do NOT try to split pills that are not marked with a line because unmarked pills can lose their potency if they are broken. When in doubt ask your pharmacist!

### Couldn't I save money by taking my pills less often?

You might save money but you will pay the price in more seizures. Trying to stretch your medication by taking your pills less often or taking fewer of them is NOT safe. Look for a drug assistance program or talk to your doctor about whether you can use a less expensive medication. ↪ EPILEPSY.COM

## Adult Epilepsy Support Group

Meets Second Tuesday of Month,  
6:30 PM @ 2919 W. 2nd Street, Wichita

June 12th: "Group's Choice"  
July 10th: "Quality of Life & Recreation"

## Bone Up on Strategies to Protect Bones

Low bone density is a side effect of some enzyme-inducing anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs), which cause the body to metabolize certain nutrients too quickly, including bone-building vitamin D.

### Medication options

The majority of patients are still being treated with older enzyme-inducing AEDs, but there are other alternatives. You may wish to discuss changes in your treatment program since many of the newer AEDs have fewer side effects.

### Bone density scan

Anyone who is taking or has taken enzyme-inducing AEDs should consider having a bone-density test, especially people with a family history of osteoporosis. Because there is growing evidence that children may also be affected, kids should be tested too. Depending on the results, you may need to be scanned every couple of years.

### Vitamin D and calcium levels

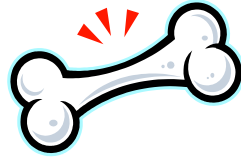
A blood test can determine if you lack these nutrients. If you do, ask your doctor about supplements and about adding dairy products and fortified orange juice to your diet.

### Healthy lifestyle

avoid smoking and alcohol, as both are linked to low bone density and fractures.

### Exercise

Be active in weight bearing exercise (such as walking, dancing, or tennis) to help keep your bones strong. Check with your physician before beginning any fitness routine. ♣ EPILEPSY ADVOCATE



## Join ERC for Wichita Wranglers Baseball



These free tickets are limited and intended for families affected by seizure disorders.

**Please call 943-1191 to reserve tickets.**

**Thurs., June 28 vs. Corpus Christi (6:30PM)**  
**Tues., July 24 vs. Tulsa (6:30 PM)**

**Batter Up!**  
**\*Reserve your tickets today\***



The Arc of Sedgwick County  
2919 West Second Street  
Wichita, Kansas 67203



Phone: 316-943-2453  
Fax: 316-943-3292  
erc@arc-sedgwickcounty.org

## Trileptal Prescribing Information Changed

Doctors are being informed about a change to prescribing information for Trileptal concerning medication side effects. The new information is that patients may experience swelling of the face, eyes, lips, tongue or difficulty in swallowing or breathing as a result of taking Trileptal, a condition called angioedema. These symptoms can be severe if they interfere with swallowing or breathing and immediate medical attention should be sought should this occur.

If a patient develops any of these reactions after treatment with Trileptal, they are advised to stop taking the drug and contact their physician, who should prescribe an alternative treatment

♣ EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

## Finding the Right Medicine

Whenever possible, doctors try to prevent seizures with a single medication. This is called monotherapy. However, some people may require polytherapy, the use of more than one medication to achieve seizure control.

When selecting a drug, your doctor will consider the type of seizures you have. Not all medications work for all types of seizures.

The physician will also consider how the medications may affect you. People react individually to medicines just as they do to other substances that enter the body, and one person may experience side effects while another may not. What all this means is that doctors may have to try several medications to find one that is effective for you.

With so much variability among people, it may also take some time to customize the dosage of medication. One of the ways your physician determines how much medication you need to take is to measure how much of it is present in your blood. Some medicines reach an effective, seizure-preventing level in the blood more quickly than others.

Knowing how much medication is in your blood shows how much medication is getting up to your brain, where seizures occur. If seizures are not controlled and the level is low, the dose of medication may have to be increased. If the level is too high, side effects are more common and the dose may be reduced.

Monotherapy is usually the preferred treatment, with a single drug prescribed in increasing increments until seizures are controlled or toxicity occurs. If the drug is ineffective or side effects are troublesome, the first drug is slowly withdrawn while an alternative is slowly introduced.

Monotherapy has the advantage of reducing the possibility of drug interactions and is usually easier for the patient to comply with. However, some people will require more than one medication to control or reduce their seizures -- polytherapy. When this is necessary, no more than one new medication is generally added at a time so that interactions or side effects can be tracked and assigned.

♣ EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

## EF's Camp Shing Invites Campers in June

Epilepsy Foundation of KS & Western MO offers **Camp Shing** June 22 -24, 2007, at Tall Oaks Conf. Center in Linwood, KS. For: Children aged 6-17 with epilepsy, their parents & siblings. For more information Contact Brandi Bagby at (816) 444-2800.

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ORGANIZATION  
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# 2007 FAMILY CAMP DAY



Sunday, August 5, 2007 • 12:30 - 5:30 PM  
 Camp Hiawatha • 1605 W. 51st N.

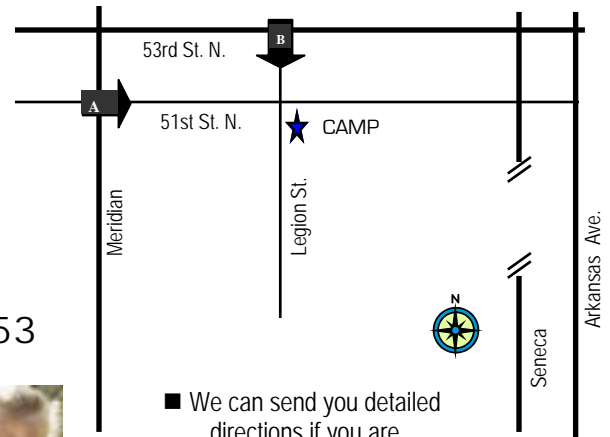
Camp is intended for persons with epilepsy and their families.  
 Camp gives those affected by seizures an opportunity to meet others facing similar challenges in living with epilepsy.



## DIRECTIONS

Camp Hiawatha is accessible :

- A) from Meridian → Go west on 51st St. /OR/
- B) from 53rd St. N. → Go south on Legion St. (LOOK FOR CAMP HIAWATHA SIGN ON 53RD)



■ We can send you detailed directions if you are coming from outside Wichita, call us at 316.943.2453

Please note: Lunch is NOT provided.

## Keynote Speaker @ 1:00 PM

**Dr. Kore Liow, MD**

Medical Director of the Via Christi Comprehensive Epilepsy Center

Dr. Liow will give a brief presentation about epilepsy and answer your questions.

## Fun Activities

Swimming (bring your suit) ★

Horseback Riding ★

Inflatables to bounce in

Games & Crafts

BBQ Dinner @ 5:00 PM

For More Information:

(316) 943-2453



Registration for yourself or family (†before July 20, 2007) :

- Individual \$ 5.00
- Family \$ 15.00

† Please pre-register.

Registration on Day of Event: \$8.00 Individual; \$18.00 Family

Do NOT send cash. Make check payable to:  
 ERC Family Camp Day

Return by July 20, 2007 to:

ERC Family Camp Day  
 2919 W. 2nd Street  
 Wichita, KS 67203-5319

\* Please list NAMES of persons attending in box below, please include AGE for children:

1
2
3
4
5

\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

ⓘ Please list any diet restrictions/ food allergies on back of this registration form (e.g., ketogenic diet).