

Non-Epileptic attack Disorder

Information and well-being resources



Non-Epileptic Attack Disorder

What is Non-Epileptic Attack Disorder?

There are many names for Non-Epileptic Attacks (NEAD) including;

- Non-epileptic seizures
- Functional seizures
- Psychogenic seizures
- Dissociative seizures

Non-epileptic seizures are not caused by electrical activity in the brain. It is thought that they are a physical reaction to distressing triggers, such as sensations, thoughts, emotions or difficult situations.

It can sometimes be difficult to understand why non-epileptic seizures have started. What happens during an attack varies from person to person.


We may ask to see videos of the episodes – these are really helpful when building up a history of the attacks.

One of the main treatments for Non-Epileptic Attacks can be psychological therapy, to help understand and manage anxiety, stress and the attacks.

What Should people do if I have an attack?

Please stay calm! Speak calmly to me. I can usually hear you during an attack, so speaking to me in a calm, reassuring manner can sometimes make the attack shorter.

My attacks do not cause damage to my brain, even if they go on for several minutes.



Stay with me, and observe, but try to draw as little attention to the attack as possible. Shouting or calling to me may be ineffective and could make the attack longer.

It can be helpful for me to try to do things that make me feel calm if I feel that an attack may be starting. Allow me to make myself comfortable and reassure me.

Keep me safe from injury. You may need to guide me or move me from an unsafe place. Move any dangerous objects out of my way.

Do not try to hold me down or restrict my movements. Do not put anything in my mouth or try to give me medication.

You do not need to call an ambulance, unless I am injured or stop breathing (this is very unlikely to happen!). If an ambulance is called, tell them I have Non-Epileptic Attack Disorder, and share my plan with them.

What can help?

If we are feeling stressed, angry or upset, our breathing becomes quick, our heart rate can change, and you may find this triggers an attack. It can help if we try to slow our breathing down. Simple breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques can be useful.

Talking to someone about your thoughts and worries can be useful, and our team may be able to offer some information about organisations that you can contact.

Useful Websites

<https://neurosymptoms.org/en/>

<https://www.neurokid.co.uk/>

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/seizures/dissociative-seizures-non-epileptic-attack-disorder-nead>

Immediate Mental Health Support Information

In an emergency, call 999 or attend a local Emergency Department.

If it is not an emergency, but you still need help fast,

- Speak to a trusted adult
- Call you GP
- Contact CAMHS helpline (0800 023 2133)

National resources

- Samaritans (116 123)
- Shout (Text 85258)
- Hub of Hope (<https://hubofhope.co.uk>)

How to contact the Epilepsy Nurses

Although your seizures aren't epilepsy, the Paediatric Epilepsy nurses at the RUH may be able to help you if you have any queries.

We usually work Mon-Fri but are sometimes out of the office for clinics or visits. Please leave a message and we will get back to you when we can.

01225 825375

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG

01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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