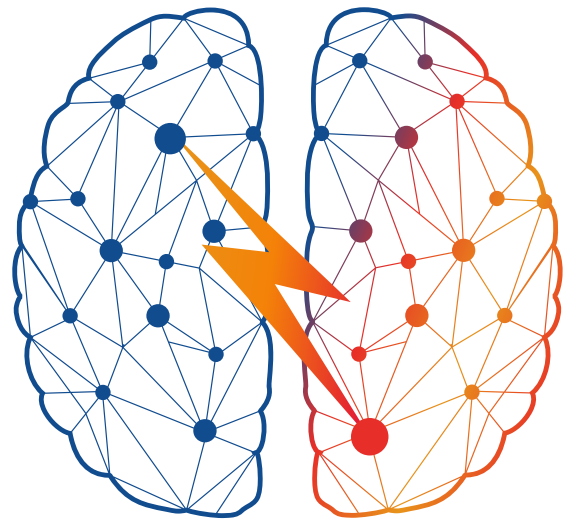


10 – 16 February 2026

NATIONAL EPILEPSY WEEK



Epilepsy is a neurological condition that affects the brain and causes recurrent, unprovoked seizures. Seizures happen when there is a sudden burst of abnormal electrical activity in the brain. Epilepsy can affect people of any age but, with the right care, many people live full and active lives.

National Epilepsy Week reminds us that understanding epilepsy helps reduce stigma and supports those living with the condition.

Epilepsy affects about 1% of the population globally. In South Africa, this is estimated to be around 500 000 people, making awareness, early diagnosis and access to treatment especially important.

What causes epilepsy?

In some cases, the cause is known, while in others it remains unclear. Possible causes include brain injury or stroke, infections (such as meningitis), genetic factors, complications at birth and brain tumours. Many people with epilepsy have no single identifiable cause.



Common symptoms

Symptoms vary depending on the type of seizure and may include brief staring spells, confusion, uncontrolled jerking movements, loss of awareness or temporary changes in behaviour or sensation. Not all seizures involve convulsions.

Diagnosis

Epilepsy is diagnosed by a doctor through a medical history, clinical assessment and tests such as an EEG (electroencephalogram) to measure brain activity and brain imaging (CT or MRI) where needed.

Treatment and management

While epilepsy cannot always be cured, it can usually be well controlled. Treatment may include anti-epileptic medication, lifestyle adjustments and in some cases surgery or specialised therapies. Medication strengthens your resistance to seizures so it's critical to take the prescribed dose at the prescribed time. The aim of drug therapy is to maintain the level of medication in your blood at the level needed to prevent or reduce seizures. Never stop taking anti-epileptic drugs suddenly without medical advice. If you forget to take a dose you should not "double dose". Most people achieve good seizure control with the right treatment plan.



Epilepsy is a chronic condition that falls under the Prescribed Minimum Benefit (PMB) category, so your diagnosis and treatment is covered by MBMed.

NEED HELP? Contact your Scheme for any benefit-related queries you may have:

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