

Social life



Good friends are understanding and supportive. In most cases, your ability to hang out with friends, and pursue your goals and interests, will not be impacted much by your epilepsy. With the right support and communication, young people with epilepsy can be as socially active as they want to be.

It is likely that you will have a mix of friends as you grow up. Some may even have epilepsy, or other health conditions like diabetes or asthma. Some will be into sports, while others will prefer to chill out inside and read, or watch Netflix. Likewise, the time you spend with your friends will depend on your personalities, skills and interests – not just your health conditions.

There are, however, some special challenges that young people with epilepsy face in maintaining a social life. One of the biggest impacts is driving. This is because your ability to have a driver licence depends on your seizure control. Basically, you have to be seizure free and on medication for a period of time, depending on your circumstances and what the law says in your state. Speak to your doctor about how your epilepsy affects your ability to get a driver license.

In the meantime, there are other transport options if you are too young to drive, or if your seizures affect your ability to get/have a license:

- **Use public transport.** Your city or state may offer discounts on transportation for people with health conditions like epilepsy, especially if you have a Health Care Card. Use the elevators (lifts) instead of the escalators if you are prone to seizures when traveling. Stand well back from the train platform, or from the road when waiting for a bus or tram, especially if you are prone to lose consciousness or awareness without warning.
- If you're okay to travel alone, **get an Uber or taxi** in areas where suitable public transport is unavailable. Ride-sharing is becoming an increasingly popular option for regular transport, and in some cases it is more cost effective than owning a car. Some states offer taxi subsidy schemes for some people with uncontrolled epilepsy.
- **Ask a friend for a lift.** It is normal for friends to give each other a lift from time to time. You might like to offer to chip in for petrol costs. You might even like to use the lift as an

opportunity to talk to your friend about your epilepsy.

- **You can ride your bike**, if your doctor says it's okay and you take some precautions. Everyone needs to wear a helmet when riding a bike, and if you have a higher risk of falling, elbow pads and knee pads might also be a good idea for further protection. If you have had surgery for your epilepsy, you might need to wear a special helmet to ensure you are protected. Ride on side roads or bike paths wherever possible. Riding a bike is not only a cheap way of getting between places, but it's also very good for keeping fit.