

# SENIORS AND SEIZURES



*Epilepsy affects over 3 million Americans.*

## What is epilepsy??

Epilepsy is a neurological condition. A seizure is a symptom of epilepsy. A diagnosis of epilepsy is generally given after a person experiences two or more unprovoked seizures.

Known causes of epilepsy include head injuries, stroke, brain tumors, poisoning, problems in brain development before birth, and serious infections such as encephalitis or meningitis. However, more than half the time, the cause of epilepsy is unknown.

*The Epilepsy Foundation has a network of affiliates nationwide that provide services in their local communities. To locate an affiliate in your area, call us toll-free or visit our website's home page and type in your zip code under 'community connections.'*

**For more info contact:**

## Program Objectives

About 300,000 older adults in the U.S. have epilepsy.

Epilepsy is more common among older adults than it is in any other age group, including infants. With the sizable boomer cohort beginning to age into their 60s, the prevalence of older adults with seizure disorders will only continue.

Many times, older people or their caregivers think they're experiencing a symptom of another medical condition, or that they're having side effects from medication, when what's really happening is a seizure. Without training, seniors and those who care for them might not recognize a seizure, attributing it instead to a "senior moment."

As the baby boomers shift the nation's demographics, the incidence of epilepsy in the population will increase dramatically. Further, to the extent that signs of cognitive decline are assumed to be normal in older adults, certain types of seizures are likely to be under diagnosed.

To address this growing problem, the Foundation offers a **\*Seniors and Seizures Program** that is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Implement and test a pilot program through the affiliate network to educate caregivers about seniors with epilepsy;
- Implement recommendations contained in the new Seniors Workgroup action plan;
- Provide a national CEU accreditation component in the new Seniors Workgroup action plan;
- Provide technical assistance and resources to affiliates to improve outreach to the senior community.

\*This program was made possible by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Available Resources

- Educational pamphlet: *Seizures after Sixty*
- Toolkit: *Seniors and Seizures*
- Bookmark: *Senior Moment or Seizure Moment?*

For additional information, visit us at: [www.epilepsyfoundation.org/living/seniors](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/living/seniors)