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Heads Up for Vets!

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A collaboration between The Anita Kaufmann Foundation and the Department of Veterans Affairs' Epilepsy Centers of Excellence.

Many of our brave servicemen and women are returning home from active duty with a new war to wage: a battle to control seizures and epilepsy. They were there for us...now it's time for us to be there for them.

Returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to blasts from IEDs (improvised explosive devices), land mines, rocket-propelled grenades and suicide bombers. Blast exposure has left too many of these troops suffering with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). TBI may result in an increased risk of developing epilepsy and/or seizures. Further, some types of seizures can be confused with the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Due to the common diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Vietnam veterans and the poor recognition of epilepsy, unknown numbers of Vietnam veterans are also experiencing seizures.

Returning from war and reorienting to civilian life is challenging. Imagine our heroes with TBI, PTSD, amputation, blindness, and other physical and emotional wounds returning to seek medical help, counseling and job placement. When these men and women also have seizures (especially seizures without convulsion that may not be recognized as seizures by family, friends, or medical providers) the job of healing and re-integrating is far more difficult. Understanding the subtle differences between seizure types, and gaining insight into local community services is imperative. Becoming an active member of the greater epilepsy community can create a deepened feeling of self-worth and respect while increasing quality of life options.

We are here to serve our heroes...

The Anita Kaufmann Foundation has established a program to specifically provide our veterans with the following support when they return to their homes and local communities:

- Free epilepsy information
- Free seizure recognition and first aid trainings for individuals, employers, community groups and organizations
- Free consultations and linkages to information about services for social support, employment, transportation, etc.
- Opportunities to connect with AKF advocates experiencing similar situations
- Opportunities to become involved in the epilepsy community as an advocate, educator, or volunteer

Along with these supports, we have created unique seizure recognition and first aid posters as well as information sheets for our Veterans. These will be distributed free of charge to every US Veterans organization and will be made available to our returning heroes and their families.

For more information or if you have questions about our Veterans Program, please contact Heads Up For Vets Program Director Ann Marie Bezuyen at 845-800-5158 or "annmarie@akfus.org" or see our website at <https://purpledayeveryday.org/events/heads-up-for-vets>.

Would you know
what to do if I had
a seizure?

Seizure First Aid

Be calm
Remove dangerous
objects
Always time the
seizure
If person has fallen, turn
on side & put something
soft under head
Never put anything in
mouth and never hold
the person down

Call 911:

For a first time seizure
If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or repeats
If person is injured, pregnant or has diabetes
If seizure occurred in water
If person does not resume breathing after the seizure
If person has no ID stating they have epilepsy

Symptoms of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) include many types of seizures.

Studies suggest TBI may result in an increased risk of developing epilepsy or seizures.

Please contact us for one on one support services and free seizure first aid material and trainings.

Phone 845-800-5158, Email annmarie@akfus.org.



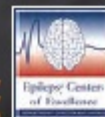
The Anita Kaufmann Foundation

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Traumatic Brain Injury and Epilepsy

WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

Epilepsy is a disorder in which brain cells (neurons) misfire producing sudden, unpredictable, excessive pulses of electrical energy in the brain which cause seizures to happen.

WHAT IS A SEIZURE?

A seizure is a temporary disruption of the electrical function of the brain that can affect the whole brain and cause unconsciousness, or can affect only part of the brain and may or may not disrupt consciousness. Seizures produce changes in behavior and/or movement.

WHAT CAN A SEIZURE LOOK LIKE?

A convulsion...stiffening or twitching of a part of the body...repeated movements that look unnatural...a sudden fall...rapid eye blinking...picking up objects or picking at clothing for no apparent reason...repeated chewing or lip-smacking...muttering or repeating words or phrases that don't make sense...wandering around in a confused way...making strange movements such as kicking or cycling...body jerks...daydreaming.

WHAT CAN A SEIZURE FEEL LIKE?

A "rising feeling" in the stomach...déjà vu...getting an unusual taste in your mouth or a smell...a sudden intense feeling of fear, happiness or sadness...a feeling of numbness (tingling)...visual disturbances...hallucinations.

FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY, WHAT IS MY RISK OF DEVELOPING EPILEPSY & SEIZURES?

Anyone who has had a brain injury is at risk.

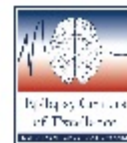
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For More Information

VA Epilepsy Centers of Excellence (ECoE) at www.epilepsy.va.gov

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Anita Kaufmann Foundation at www.purpledayeveryday.org/anita-kaufmann-foundation/ annmarie@akfus.org

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