Harvest Gala 2016-A Night To Remember!

The Epilepsy Foundation of Western Wisconsin hosted our incredible Harvest Gala-Silent Auction and Dinner on November 11th, 2016 at the beautiful Florian Gardens Conference Center in Eau Claire. This evening is was an wonderful evening filled with fabulous guests, an elegant dinner, and an extraordinary Silent Auction!! We thank our generous sponsor, WEAU 13, for their incredible and creative promos and television coverage. We are honored to have Bob Gallaher, a well known and respected, Anchor for Weau, who is an incredible Master of Ceremonies year after year. We thank Lundbeck Pharmaceuticals, Leader Telegram, Holiday Inn-Eau Claire South, Cody Limousines, for their corporate sponsorship.

Our Keynote speaker was Olympic Bronze Medalist in Women’s Ice Hockey, Chanda Gunn. Diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of nine, she overcame the many challenges presented by the disorder to become a world class athlete. She continues to battle epilepsy but never lets it defeat her and lives an active life with her family. She is heavily involved in charity work, serving as an Athletes vs Epilepsy Ambassador. She spoke from the heart and her story and presentation was very inspirational. She believes people with epilepsy should support one another and encourages the community to not let seizures discourage them from chasing their dreams.

The Silent Auction was absolutely incredible this year! The over 150 incredible, diverse items were well received and enthralled all of our guests! The Champagne Punch Raffle was great for men and ladies this year with the lovely jewelry donated by Lasker Jewelers and the handsome tie from Roffe’ Accessories! Beau Hesteken, owner of Lasting Images Videography, took amazing photographs to create memories for us all. The delicious dinner and beautiful ambience of Florian Gardens made this event absolutely unforgettable. We thank Florian’s awesome staff for their incredible service throughout the evening. We would like to thank our guests, and sponsors, for the wonderful support which made 2016 Harvest Gala’s an incredible success!

Please mark your calendars for our Annual Harvest Gala in November 2017!

~ Lou Kelsey, Director of Client Services & Community Resources
Epilepsy is not a mental illness. In fact, the vast majority of people living with epilepsy have no cognitive or psychological problem. For the most part, psychological issues in epilepsy are limited to people with severe and uncontrolled epilepsy.

### Epilepsy and Intellectual Disability

Epilepsy itself does not cause severe intellectual problems, but the two can occur together and be caused by the same thing. The degree of cognitive or intellectual problems is related to:

- epilepsy starting at an early age
- having many seizures
- having an underlying brain lesion
- poor seizure control
- how long it takes to get seizures controlled

In young children, development can be delayed due to uncontrolled seizures. Individuals with severe intellectual problems have higher rates of brain abnormalities (or changes in the brain structure). They may result in different kinds of seizures. These also usually start in early life.

### Epilepsy and Depression

Depression in people living with epilepsy is very common and an important issue for children and adults. Symptoms of depression can be constant or change over time. They can vary from mild to severe and may have a great impact on daily activities and quality of life. Depressed persons may lose interest in hobbies; have changes in appetite; feel sad, angry, or scared; and have trouble sleeping.

Many possible causes of depression in people living with epilepsy have been identified:

- The most common cause is injury to a part of the brain that controls mood.
- Hormone levels, especially low estrogen, can also trigger depression and can affect seizure frequency.
- Anti-seizure medications, like phenobarbital, can affect mood centers and may increase risk of depression.

Depression, with or without epilepsy, is treatable.

- Treating depression and epilepsy involves identifying the best combination and the lowest dose possible of anti-seizure medications and antidepressants to maintain seizure control and improve depression.
- Psychotherapy, education, and family therapy can also be very helpful.

### Epilepsy and Cognitive Disorders

The most frequent cognitive complaints in adults are feeling slowed down mentally, memory impairment, and attention problems.

- Memory problems are an important feature of seizures arising from one part of the brain called the temporal lobe.
- Short-term memory problems are seen most often.
- Dementia has also been diagnosed in some people with poorly controlled epilepsy.
- Medications can also affect memory.

### Epilepsy and Anxiety

Anxiety is related to epilepsy in different ways.

- Anxiety can occur as a reaction to the diagnosis, a symptom of seizures, or even a side effect of some anti-seizure medications.
- Most frequently, anxiety appears after the diagnosis of epilepsy or after the first seizure and can involve the fear of having another event.
- Feeling social isolated or rejected due to epilepsy may influence anxiety symptoms.
- Causes of epilepsy can also play a role in development of anxiety.

The best way to address these problems include psychotherapy, counseling, behavioral therapy, and, in some cases, anti-anxiety medications.
Epilepsy and Behavioral Issues

- Epilepsy influences the lives of people with seizures and families as it restricts activities and forces specific behaviors. Taking medicines, not driving, maintaining regular sleep cycles, limiting alcohol use, and making other lifestyle changes can lead to feeling a loss of independence.

- Factors associated with behavioral problems involve fear, stress, frustration, and embarrassment of having seizures.

- Areas in the brain that control emotions and behavior may not work properly due to epilepsy.

- Finally, anti-seizure medications can change the balance of chemicals in the brain that may affect a person’s behavior.

Side Effects of Medications

Many anti-seizure medications can cause psychological changes.

- Older medications like phenytoin, carbamazepine, and phenobarbital have been related to memory difficulties.

- Topiramate has been associated with word-finding difficulties; however, these tend to be related to high doses. Newer medications are less likely to cause this type of side effect.

- Levetiracetam is associated with changes in mood or behavior and can worsen other psychiatric conditions.

- Some seizure medications can be helpful and be used as mood stabilizers too, (for example lamotrigine, carbamazepine, valproic acid). These tend to have a positive effect on memory, behavior, and anxiety. Older people living with epilepsy are more vulnerable to the side effects of anti-seizure medicines.

Non-drug Treatments

- Epilepsy surgery usually does not cause psychological problems, and, by virtue of improving seizure control, it can even help memory.

- Neurostimulation is another technique that can improve mood and quality of life over time.

Authored by: Karla Mora Rodriguez MD, Neurology Resident, Costa Rica, and Selim R. Benbadis MD,

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The Seizure Recognition & First Aid training program is a comprehensive instruction session about epilepsy, seizures, and appropriate first aid responses. This training defines epilepsy and what seizures can look like. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Epilepsy Foundation Trainings

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Managing Students with Seizures is a continuing education training program designed to provide the school nurse with information, strategies and resources that will enable him/her to better manage the student with seizures by supporting positive treatment outcomes, maximizing educational and developmental opportunities, and ensuring a safe and supportive environment. Nurses can earn 3.2 continuing education credits for free through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through in person or online trainings.

School Personnel

Classroom teachers, special education teachers, librarians, teacher assistants, school bus drivers, aides, and other staff members or volunteers in grads K-12 can all benefit and can receive continuing education units.

Child Care Personnel

Through this program we hope to dispel myths and reduce the perceived stigma associated with epilepsy within young children.
Common Epilepsy Triggers

Epilepsy affects each person differently. Below is a guide to some common seizure triggers. You may not feel or notice anything in particular. Or you may have triggers which are not mentioned here. Knowing the type of epilepsy and trigger is important information for a correct diagnosis. You can then work on eliminating these triggers whenever possible or find ways to lessen their effect on you. Keeping a seizure diary is the most effective way of keeping track of what triggers your seizures.

Reflex Epilepsy
Some people notice that their seizures occur in response to very specific stimuli or situations, as if the seizure is an automatic “reflex.” In this type of seizure, it occurs consistently in relation to a specific trigger.

Stress
Stress can trigger hyperventilation which can provoke seizures, especially absence seizures. It can increase cortisol, known as “the stress hormone” because cortisol is secreted in higher levels during the body’s “fight or flight” response to stress.

Lack of Sleep
Inadequate or fragmented sleep can set off seizures in lots of people. In one study, the lowest risk for seizures was during REM sleep (when dreams occur). The highest risk was during light non-REM stages of sleep.

Flickering or Flashing Light
If you have photosensitive epilepsy, certain types of flickering or flashing light may incite a seizure. The trigger could be exposure to television screens, computer monitors, certain video games or TV broadcasts containing rapid flashes, casino lights, even alternating patterns of different colors, in addition to intense strobe lights.

Heat
Heat-induced seizures, are most commonly experienced by children. However, only one in 100 kids who experience this type of seizure is also diagnosed with epilepsy and many outgrow the condition before they reach the age of five.

Hormones
For many women, certain hormones seem to trigger seizures at particular times in their menstrual cycle. It can be during ovulation, menstruation, pregnancy or menopause.

Food Allergies
Both food sensitivities and allergies can definitely trigger seizures. Especially foods that are rich in glutamate and aspartame — two very excitatory amino acids.

Illness
High fevers in children can commonly incite a seizure. Vomiting, diarrhea, and fever are all triggers. And vomiting may reduce the dosage level of previously ingested anti-seizure medication.

Prescription Drugs
Some prescription medications — especially penicillin, anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs — can prevent your medication from working. It could be caused by the way your system responds to a certain a drug, a combination of drugs, reaction or withdrawal. Make sure all your doctors know everything you take.

Over-the-Counter-Drugs
Certain over-the-counter medications are considered safe for those with epilepsy. For runny and stuffed noses, consider strong pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine. For aches and pains, acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) is probably the safest medication. And Aspirin also appears safe — but it should not be given to children.

Alcohol
Alcohol can be dangerous when mixed with sedative drugs and can cause coma, or even death. Large amounts of alcohol are thought to raise the risk of seizures and may even cause them.

Cigarette Smoking
Nicotine is both a stimulant and a depressant to the central nervous system. The nicotine in cigarettes acts on receptors for the excitatory neurotransmitter acetylcholine in the brain, which increases neuronal firing.

Caffeine
Much like nicotine, caffeine stimulates the nervous system. Adrenaline is released and the liver begins to emit stored blood sugar. Insulin is then released, and blood sugar drops below normal—a common seizure trigger.

Musicogenic Epilepsy
This is a form of reflexive epilepsy in which a seizure is triggered by music or specific frequencies. Sensitivity to music varies from person to person.
Weird Epilepsy Triggers

Here’s a list of uncommon epilepsy triggers you may have experienced or know about. Feel free to add to this list of the weird and the unknown…

**Atmospheric Conditions**
Changes in air pressure or any sudden action, can act as an instant stressor.

**Barometric Pressure**
Weather differences such as sudden changes in temperature, dark skies, thunder, or bright, hot sunlight and humidity may be a definite trigger for some.

**Body Toxins**
Exposure to toxins in our air, water or food, can cause everything from vomiting, diarrhea, liver or renal failure, blood sugar levels, and electrolyte imbalances. Constipation can be added to the list also.

**Boredom**
You always thought you could be “bored to death” but it can also incite a seizure. By being isolated, having no social interactions, diversions, or recreational activities — all that’s left is to think about yourself and anticipate when your next seizure will come.

**Dental Problems**
Have your teeth and gums checked regularly. Some of your medications just love the calcium found in teeth and bones, making them fragile and prone to breakages and disease.

**Diabetes**
People with hyperglycemia tend to have focal or local seizures. And those who are hypoglycemic, tend to have tonic-clonic seizures. To keep your blood sugar from fluctuating, eat a good breakfast when you wake up.

**Grapefruit**
It has been proven that grapefruit/juice/rind/skin can negatively affect some medications. Tegretol in any form is one of the main anti-epilepsy medications that grapefruit affects.

**Hyperventilation**
Oxygen is not getting to your brain and the hyperventilation expends vast amounts of energy. You could be in shock and this is where it is difficult to tell whether it is a response from an over stimulated brain or a true seizure.

**Immersion in Hot or Cold Water**
Anything done too suddenly can lead to a seizure. Going from cold to a warm temperature, or going from a warm house to a bitter cold day outdoors can shock your system.

**Low Blood Sugar Level**
This leads to an insufficient supply of nutrients to the brain causing brain degeneration.

**Migraines**
People with epilepsy are more than twice as likely to develop migraine headaches as those without seizures.

**Odors and Perfumes**
Perfume directly affects the brain and has both a physiological and a psychological effect upon our respiration and breathing, as well as upon our moods and thoughts. Although our sense of smell declines with age, you need to be aware that strong or even subtle smells or perfumes can be one of your triggers for seizures.

**Overeating**
Causes hardening of the brain arteries, leading to a decrease in mental power.

**Sleep Apnea**
Sleep apnea includes pauses in breathing, indicated by gasping, snoring or difficulty in breathing during the night. These pauses in breathing can easily be confused with seizures. In fact, having apnea can trigger seizures. Having seizures can also trigger apnea; so it can work either way.

**Talking Rarely**
Intellectual conversations will promote the efficiency of the brain.

**Water**
Yes, you can have too much of a good thing. Water is good for us, but it can dilute your medications. It’s best to spread your fluid intake over the day. Your body needs a balance of salt and water. And be cautious of drinking water from plastic bottles and leaving them lying around in the heat.
Happy New Year everyone! I can’t believe how fast 2016 went by! It just seems like a week ago we were greeting the almost 700 people who came to our Stroll in the Park and we are just about to start planning the 2017 Stroll. I thought in this letter that I would recap some of what went on here in 2016. First, our $5.00 Challenge was a huge success. We had a matching grant up to $7,000.00 and we exceeded that total. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this challenge and please consider contributing to this again in 2017. As I mentioned before, the Stroll was great. We brought epilepsy awareness to more people then when we have in the past. During the summer we had Camp Phoenix, where we sent children with epilepsy to a medical camp for a week. They really had a good time and look forward to the 2017 camp. We also sent five adults to the Adult Retreat in September. This is a weekend retreat where adults with epilepsy get to try new and different things they normally wouldn’t get to try in the “regular” world. Another project we checked ID’s at Country Jam. Of course, it was during some of the hottest days of the summer, but it still was a lot of fun. We started a new project with Shopko called Lemonade for Livey. This project had Shopko employees collecting a dollar from patrons for epilepsy and we got to have a lemonade stand where we gave lemonade away for any donation. Since this occurred at every Shopko in our area, this brought more awareness about epilepsy to many more people. We hope we can continue with this project with Shopko in the future. We had a great event called Ribfest, a gathering of people who love ribs, both cooking and eating. This was organized by two of our Board members and was really fun and tasty. We also had our second major event of the year called the Harvest Gala. We welcomed Chanda Gunn and her daughter to the Chippewa Valley. Chanda was the bronze winning goalie for the 2006 United States Women's Hockey team in Turin Italy. I did get to hold her medal and man that thing was heavy. The Florian Gardens was the setting for this and around 140 people enjoyed a fabulous silent auction, a delicious meal, and Chanda’s talk about being an athlete with epilepsy.

At the beginning of the year I always have a few people to thank. First of all, I want to thank everyone who helped and/or donated to this Foundation this past year. Due to cut backs the last few years it is harder to raise the funds needed to support everyone with epilepsy in our 22 county service area. Your support to us means so much to us, and our clients. We are still blessed to have Lou Kelsey here as our Client Services and Community Resources Director. Lou puts in tireless hours to make sure our clients are served. I would also like to thank Nichole Gervanek. Nichole came to us a volunteer from the university and continued with us. She has really helped Lou and I out this past year, but unfortunately for us (but not for her) she has left us to go to pharmacy school in Southern Wisconsin. I also need to thank the businesses who supported the Epilepsy Foundation of Western Wisconsin this past year. Without everyone's support, we could not continue on with our mission to lead the fight to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives.

As 2017 begins be assured that the support, dependability, and dedication we all here have to our clients, community, and to the Foundation will never waiver. Whatever comes in the future we will meet it head on with the same determination and professionalism as in the past. I invite everyone to continue your support with us as we explore what 2017 will bring us. Please consider making a donation to us, because it is only with your help that we can move forward.

Thank you - Rick

I WANT TO HELP PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY IN MY COMMUNITY!

Enclosed is a Donation for vital programs of advocacy, support, and education

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Thank you ~ EFWW STAFF
WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

PLEASE JOIN THE $5 CHALLENGE TO HELP US CONTINUE THE FIGHT AGAINST EPILEPSY!

DONATIONS UP TO $7,000 WILL BE MATCHED!

Nearly 3 million in the U.S. and over 14,000 in Western Wisconsin men, women, and children have epilepsy. We need to raise $14,000 by February 24th to make sure we can continue to provide our client service and education programs to our clients and families!

IT’S AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3!

1. We are asking you to donate $5 (tax deductible) or more and…
2. Share this with EVERYONE YOU KNOW family, co-workers, friends, neighbors, etc…..who will donate $5 or more and………..
3. Have each of them share it with everyone they know and the campaign continues to grow! Help us reach our goal by sharing on Facebook, Twitter., or any social media. Even better, send an e-mail to everyone.

We will have updates on our Facebook account and our Website.

You can donate by mail to the: or by credit card at:
Epilepsy Foundation of Western Wisconsin www.epilepsywesternwi.org
1812 Brackett Ave, Suite 5 and click the donate button
Eau Claire, WI 54701 For more information contact us at
715-834-4455 or 800-924-2105 efww_info@sbcglobal.net

Other Ways To Raise Funds For The Challenge

- Donate and then ask your employer if you can set out a bucket or envelope at work and challenge your co-workers to donate and ask your employer to donate or match.
- Have a dinner where instead of bringing food or wine bring a donation.
- Set up your own challenge where you donate an amount and have people donate until that amount is reached.
- Have a winter garage or bake sale someplace warm.

We will put more ideas out on our website at www.epilepsywestern.com
EPILEPSY FACTS

You can’t swallow your tongue during a seizure. It's physically impossible.

You should NEVER force something into the mouth of someone having a seizure. Absolutely not! Forcing something into the mouth of someone having a seizure is a good way to chip teeth, cut gums, or even break someone's jaw. The correct first aid is simple. Just gently roll the person on one side, support their head, protect from injury, and make sure their breathing is okay.

DON'T restrain someone having a seizure. Most seizures end in seconds or a few minutes and will end on their own. You can protect the person from injury by following simple first-aid guidelines.

Epilepsy is NOT contagious. You simply can't catch epilepsy from another person.

Anyone can develop epilepsy. Seizures start for the first time in people over age 65 almost as often as it does in children. Seizures in the elderly are often the after effect of other health problems like stroke and heart disease.

Most people with epilepsy CAN DO the same things that people without epilepsy can do. However, some people with frequent seizures may not be able to work, drive, or may have problems in other parts of their life.

People with epilepsy CAN handle jobs with responsibility and stress. People with seizure disorders are found in all walks of life. They may work in business, government, the arts and all sorts of professions. If stress bothers their seizures, they may need to learn ways to manage stress at work. But everyone needs to learn how to cope with stress! There may be some types of jobs that people with epilepsy can’t do because of possible safety problems. Otherwise, having epilepsy should not affect the type of job or responsibility that a person has.

Even with today's medication, epilepsy CANNOT be cured. Epilepsy is a chronic medical problem that for many people can be successfully treated. Unfortunately, treatment doesn't work for everyone. AT LEAST 1 million people in the United States have uncontrolled epilepsy. There is still an urgent need for more research, better treatments and a cure.

Epilepsy is NOT rare. There are more than twice as many people with epilepsy in the U.S. as the number of people with cerebral palsy (500,000), muscular dystrophy (250,000), multiple sclerosis (350,000), and cystic fibrosis (30,000) combined. Epilepsy can occur as a single condition, or may be seen with other conditions affecting the brain, such as cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, autism, Alzheimer's, and traumatic brain injury.

You CAN die from epilepsy. While death in epilepsy doesn't happen frequently, epilepsy is a very serious condition and individuals do die from seizures. The most common cause of death is SUDEP or Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy. While there is a lot we still don’t know about SUDEP, experts estimate that one out of every 1000 people with epilepsy die from SUDEP each year. People can also die from prolonged seizures (status epilepticus). About 22,000 to 42,000 deaths in the U.S. each year occur from these seizure emergencies.

What happens in a seizure may look different from one person to another. However, seizures are usually stereotypic, which means the same things or behaviors tend to occur in a person each time they have a seizure. The seizure behavior may be inappropriate for the time and place, but it is unlikely to cause harm to anyone.

People with epilepsy are usually not physically limited in what they can do. During and after a seizure, a person may have trouble moving or doing their usual activity. Some people may have trouble with physical abilities due to other neurological problems. Aside from these problems, a person who is not having a seizure is usually not limited in what they can do physically.

Authored by: Patricia O. Shafer, RN, MN | Joseph I. Sirven, MD on 7/2013
Reviewed by: Joseph I. Sirven, MD | Patricia O. Shafer, RN, MN on 3/2014
If you are interested in scheduling a training for your school or workplace, please call EFWW at 715-834-4455 or 800-924-2105.

Schedule a Seizure Recognition & First Aid Training for your School or Workplace today!

The Seizure Recognition & First Aid training program is a comprehensive instruction session about epilepsy, seizures, and appropriate first aid responses. This training defines epilepsy and what seizures can look like. Donations are greatly appreciated.

Participants will be able to:
- Recognize what seizures can look like
- Appropriately respond to seizures in three areas of first aid
- Know when to call for emergency assistance
- Understand their role as responder or observer

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Visit our website: www.epilepsywesternwi.org
or visit us Facebook

1812 Brackett Avenue, Suite 5 (715) 834-4455
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701 (800) 924-2105

If you know of someone who would benefit from Wave Length, please email EFWW at efww_info@sbcglobal.net
If you no longer wish to receive Wave Length, send an email request to efww_info@sbcglobal.net.

* Tentative Dates
Get Ready to Stroll!

Saturday, May 13 ~ Irvine Park
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Join EFWW and local celebrities for our annual Stroll in the Park for Epilepsy in beautiful Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin on Saturday, May 13th. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and the Stroll starts at 10:30 with a delicious picnic and fun prizes to follow!

Start forming teams and collecting pledges now! Contact our office at 715-834-4455 or email us at efww_info@sbcglobal.net with any questions or to volunteer.

We look forward to seeing you there and supporting our mission to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives.