



**Westchester
Medical Center**

Westchester Medical Center Health Network

Welcome to **Westchester Medical Center Epilepsy Clinic**

Your Partner in Living Well with Epilepsy





Welcome to the Westchester Medical Center Epilepsy Clinic

We are so glad you have chosen us to be part of your care team.

Whether you are newly diagnosed or looking for specialized support, we're here to guide you, answer questions, and help you live fully and safely.

This packet gives you helpful information to get started—take your time reading it, keep it as a reference, and let us know how we can help.

Table of Contents

About Our Clinic	4
Contact Us	4
What is Epilepsy?	5
Seizure First Aid	6
Living Safely with Epilepsy	6
Medications and Refills	7
Helpful Tools	7
Seizure Monitoring Devices	7
Smartphone Videos	8
Driving and the Law	9
What is SUDEP?	9
Mental Health and Community Support	9
FAQs	10
Telehealth Visits	10
Accessing Patient Portal	11



About Our Clinic

We are part of **Westchester Medical Center Health Network**.

Our epilepsy specialists diagnose, treat and manage seizures and events concerning for seizures. In addition, as a specialized center we have doctors with specific expertise in:

- › Drug-resistant epilepsy
- › Seizures after concussions or traumatic brain injuries
- › Women with epilepsy, especially during pregnancy
- › Patients transitioning from pediatric to adult care

Our team is committed to providing you with excellent care and compassionate support.

Phone: 914.493.3111

Website: wmchealth.org/service-line/neurosciences/seizure-disorders

QR Code for our website:



Contact Us

Westchester Medical Center Advanced Physician Services – Neurology

Your primary epilepsy clinic:

_____ Phone: _____

Questions or need help?

Call the Epilepsy Care Team: 914.493.3111

Our team will connect you to the right location or specialist.

Patient Portal: mycare.wmchealth.org

Sign up

If you'd like to receive occasional email updates about community events, educational programs, and other resources for patients and families, you can sign up using the QR code to the right.





What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a neurological condition that causes a person to have repeated seizures. A seizure occurs due to abnormal electrical activity in the brain. This can affect how you move, feel, think, or remain aware of your surroundings.

Not everyone who has a seizure has epilepsy.

Seizures can happen from things like high fever, low blood sugar, or head injury. Epilepsy is diagnosed when someone has **two or more unprovoked seizures** (not caused by a temporary medical issue). Seizures vary widely—from full-body convulsions to brief moments of confusion or staring.

There are two main types of seizures:

Focal Seizures

These begin in **one specific area** of the brain. They may cause:

- › Strange sensations (like smells, tastes, or feelings)
- › Jerking in one part of the body (like an arm or leg)
- › Staring or confusion without full loss of awareness

You may be fully awake, or you might feel “off” or disconnected during the event.

Generalized Seizures

These affect **both sides of the brain** at once. They may cause:

- › Stiffening and shaking of the whole body (tonic-clonic seizures)
- › Sudden drop or collapse (atonic seizures)
- › Blank staring spells (absence seizures)
- › Quick muscle jerks (myoclonic seizures)

Your neurologist will work with you to understand your seizure type and create a personalized treatment plan.

Remember: Having epilepsy doesn’t define you. Many people with epilepsy live full, active lives with the right treatment and support.



Seizure First Aid & When to Call 911

During a seizure:

- › Keep the person safe and lay them on their side.
- › Do not restrain them or put anything in their mouth.
- › Stay until they're fully awake and aware.

Call 911 if:

- › A seizure lasts more than 5 minutes
- › The person has repeated seizures without recovery
- › They're injured, not breathing, or don't return to normal

Post-seizure:

Note the time, duration, symptoms, and potential triggers.
This helps guide treatment.



Living Safely with Epilepsy

Here are a few ways to stay safe:

- › **Take your medications as prescribed** - consistency is key.
- › **Rescue medications** and nasal sprays such as Nayzilam and Valtoco
- › **Let someone you trust know** what your seizures look like and how they can help
- › **Avoid common triggers** like stress, sleep deprivation, and flashing lights.
- › **Avoid swimming or bathing alone** - showers are safer.

Need help creating a safety plan? We can help during your visit.



Medication Refills & Tips

- › Request refills **at least 7** days before running out.
- › Track doses and side effects in a **medication log** or app (see below).
- › Let your provider know if you're experiencing side effects like dizziness, rash, or mood changes.



Helpful Tools: Trackers & Reminders

Apps to help track seizures and medications:

- › **Epsy:** A free, user-friendly app created by the Epilepsy Foundation to help you stay on top of your medications and track seizures. You can use Epsy to organize your meds, upcoming appointments, and track any symptoms you experience. If you find Epsy helpful, you can also download a summary of what you have logged and bring it to your appointment so that we can better understand your day-to-day and help improve it.
- › We recommend keeping a seizure diary and medication list—bring it to appointments!



Seizure Monitoring Devices

Extra Support for Safety and Peace of Mind

Technology can play a helpful role in managing epilepsy. While no device can detect every type of seizure, many tools are available that can help track seizures, alert caregivers, or provide important data for your care team.

Embrace2 by Empatica (FDA-cleared)

- › A wearable wristband that tracks changes in motion and skin activity.
- › Alerts caregivers in real time when it detects a seizure.
- › Especially helpful for monitoring tonic-clonic (convulsive) seizures

SAMi® Nighttime Monitoring Camera

- › A camera and app system designed to detect unusual nighttime movements.
- › Sends alerts to a caregiver's phone or tablet if abnormal motion is detected.
- › Useful for parents, partners, or caregivers concerned about seizures during sleep.

Apple Watch

- › Certain seizure tracking apps (like SeizAlarm or EpiWatch) use motion sensors to detect repetitive movements that may indicate a seizure.
- › Can send alerts to emergency contacts when a potential seizure is detected.
- › Helpful for people who have convulsive seizures

Note: These tools work best when used alongside traditional seizure diaries and regular communication with your provider. No device is perfect—but they can be a helpful part of your safety toolkit.

If you're interested in trying one, talk to us! We can help you choose a device that fits your needs.



Using Smartphone Videos to Record Seizures

If you or someone close to you is able to safely record a seizure, a short video can be extremely helpful in understanding what type of seizure is occurring. Video recordings help your neurologist see what happens during the event—especially if you're unsure how to describe it later.

Tips for Recording:

- › Only record if it is safe to do so—never delay providing first aid.
- › Start recording as early as possible in the seizure.
- › Keep the person's full body and face in the frame if possible.
- › Say the date and time out aloud and describe what's happening if helpful.
- › Record a few minutes after the seizure ends to capture recovery behavior.

What to do with the video:

- › Send it to your provider through the Portal (see page 11)
- › Bring it to your next appointment.
- › Keep it stored safely and privately.

Note: There is more information on how to use smartphone videos and a video detailing how to record them on our website, wmchealth.org/service-line/neurosciences/seizure-disorders, under the “Diagnosing Seizure Disorders” section.



Driving and the Law

Epilepsy can affect your ability to drive. In New York:

- › You must be seizure-free for a period (typically 12 months). Rules can vary depending on individual circumstances—talk to your provider.
- › Patients are encouraged to notify the DMV
- › You and your provider can complete the DMV Medical Review Unit form (MV-80U.1) To download, visit: dmv.ny.gov/forms/mv80u1.pdf

Check NY laws here: epilepsy.com/lifestyle/driving-and-transportation/laws/new-york



What is SUDEP?

Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP) is rare but important to know about. It refers to sudden, unexpected death in a person with epilepsy. We believe in sharing important information while focusing on what you can do to stay safe.

What increases risk?

- › Frequent generalized tonic-clonic seizures
- › Seizures during sleep
- › Poor medication adherence

You can reduce your risk by:

- › Taking your medication as prescribed
- › Letting us know about any seizures
- › Using nighttime seizure monitors if recommended

Learn more: health.ny.gov/publications/8087.pdf



Mental Health and Community Support

Anxiety and depression are common in people with epilepsy—and treatable. Let us know if you're struggling; we're here to help.

You're not alone. Ask your provider about:

- › Local epilepsy support groups
- › Educational resources
- › Counseling options
- › Upcoming community events or research studies if interested

FAQs

Can I help guide my treatment?

Yes! Be ready to share:

- › What types of seizures you have
- › What meds you are taking and any side effects
- › When your seizures happen and how long they last

Is alcohol or drug use dangerous?

Alcohol and recreational drugs can increase seizure risk for many people. Please avoid them and talk to us if you have questions.



Telehealth Visits

We offer remote visits so you can have visits and discuss any questions you have directly with your provider from home.

Before your telehealth appointment:

- › Have a list of your medications and recent seizures
- › Find a quiet, well-lit room
- › Test your camera and mic

We'll send a secure link via email or text. Just click to join!

During your telehealth appointment:

- › Providers can assist in filling out any necessary forms
- › Review medications and any recent seizures



Accessing the Patient Portal

Secure, Convenient Communication

Our patient portal is a helpful tool where you can:

- › View test results and appointment summaries
- › Request medication refills
- › Send non-urgent messages to your care team – including videos of events
- › Access your medical history and book appointments

How to Access the Portal:

Visit: mycare.wmchealth.org

Need help enrolling? Ask our front desk during your visit or email:
portalhelp@wmchealth.org

A Note About Messaging

Please use the portal for **non-urgent communication only**.

Do not use the portal for anything that needs a response within 1–2 days, such as:

- › Urgent medical questions
- › New or worsening symptoms
- › Time-sensitive medication needs

Instead, please call your clinic directly for anything urgent.

We'll do our best to respond to portal messages within **2–3 business days**.

We're Here for You

Living with epilepsy can feel overwhelming at times, but you're not alone. Our team is here to support you, answer questions, and work with you every step of the way. Please reach out whenever you need us.



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