



# November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month

It's Time to *Talk About It!*

## What is epilepsy?

- Epilepsy is a disorder of the brain defined as having two or more seizures. The seizures happen when clusters of nerve cells in the brain signal abnormally, which may briefly alter a person's consciousness, movements or actions.
- Epilepsy is not a single disorder but a spectrum of more than 40 different types of syndromes.
- Epilepsy affects people of all ages, races and countries. It is not contagious.
- About one percent of the population in this country—almost 3 million people—has epilepsy. About 50 million people worldwide have epilepsy.
- Epilepsy can begin at any time of life.
- About one in four of the more than 200,000 new cases of seizures every year is in children; one in three cases begins in people over the age of 65. The remaining 40 percent of new cases start in people between the ages of 16 and 64.
- The vast majority of women with epilepsy have normal, healthy babies. Women should consult their doctor before becoming pregnant, so that the safest treatment regimens can be prescribed.
- While medications and other treatments help many people of all ages who live with epilepsy, more than a million people continue to have seizures that can severely limit their school achievements, employment prospects and participation in all of life's experiences.
- Despite major progress in diagnosis and treatment, many people continue to have immense misconceptions about epilepsy. That is why awareness—and talking about it—is so important.

For more information, visit [www.epilepsyfoundation.org](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org) or, in Spanish, [www.fundacionparalaepilepsia.org](http://www.fundacionparalaepilepsia.org)