



## **Juvenile Absence Epilepsy**

### **What Is Juvenile Absence Epilepsy?**

Patients with juvenile absence epilepsy have absence seizures and generalized tonic-clonic seizures. Its onset is usually between 9- and 13-years old, and seizures are usually well controlled by medications. However, seizures may happen in adulthood, so medications will likely be needed for a long time.

### **What Are the Signs & Symptoms of Juvenile Absence Epilepsy?**

Two types of seizures can happen in juvenile absence epilepsy. The types and their symptoms are:

#### **Absence Seizures**

An absence seizure starts suddenly in the middle of an activity and ends abruptly. During the seizure, a child:

- Blanks out or has staring spells that last 5-20 seconds
- May flutter their eyes or look upward
- Is unaware of what is going on during the seizure
- returns to normal activity and won't remember having the seizure after it's over
- Has lip-smacking, chewing movements

#### **Tonic-Clonic Seizures**

In this type of seizure, a child:

- Has convulsions, or rigid muscles and rhythmic body jerks
- Rolls the eyes back
- Cries out
- May pee or poop
- Can't respond during seizure
- Is confused and sleepy after the seizure

## **What Causes Juvenile Absence Epilepsy?**

The cause of juvenile absence epilepsy isn't known, but it tends to run in families.

## **How Is Juvenile Absence Epilepsy Diagnosed?**

If your child had a seizure, the doctor probably will want you to see a pediatric neurologist. The neurologist will ask questions about what happened during the seizure, do an exam, and order an EEG.

## **How Is Juvenile Absence Epilepsy Treated?**

Seizures are usually well-controlled with medicine, which many people will need to take for several years.

## **How Can Parents Help?**

To keep your child safe during a seizure, make sure that other adults and caregivers (family members, babysitters, teachers, coaches, etc.) know what to do during a seizure. Your doctor may prescribe an emergency medicine to give if your child has a long seizure or many seizures in a short amount of time. Be sure to ask your doctor about a seizure rescue plan for your child.

Juvenile absence epilepsy may be a lifelong condition. But many patients go on to live a normal life with a few extra steps taken to keep them safe.

## **What Else Should I Know?**

If your child has epilepsy, reassure them that they're not alone. Your doctor and the care team can answer questions and offer support. They also might be able to recommend a local support group. Online organizations can help too, such as:

- [Epilepsy Foundation](#)
- [CDC – Managing Epilepsy](#)