

Temporal Lobe Epilepsy

What Is Temporal Lobe Epilepsy?

Patients with temporal lobe epilepsy have seizures that start in one of the temporal lobes of the brain. This area is involved in controlling emotions, memory and language.

What Happens in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy?

The seizures in temporal lobe epilepsy are focal seizures, and patients may have:

- Déjà vu (a feeling of already having been in the present situation)
- A smell, taste, sound or vision
- An emotion (such as fear)
- Nausea or a rising sensation in the belly
- Impaired awareness
- Rub their hands or smack their lips
- Stiff posture of one hand

Sometimes a focal seizure can spread to both sides of the brain. This is called a focal to bilateral tonic-clonic seizure. With this type of seizure, the entire body jerks with forceful movements.

What Causes Temporal Lobe Epilepsy?

The most common causes of temporal lobe epilepsy in children are brain malformations (focal cortical dysplasia), tumors and hippocampal atrophy.

How Is Temporal Lobe Epilepsy Diagnosed?

A pediatric neurologist will diagnose the condition by doing tests such as:

- EEG
- VEEG, or video electroencephalography (EEG with video recording)
- MRI
- PET

How Is Temporal Lobe Epilepsy Treated?

Seizures usually get better with medication. If antiseizure medication don't control the seizures, doctors may recommend epilepsy surgery. In many cases, epilepsy surgery can lead to very good results for patients with temporal lobe epilepsy.

How Can I Help My Child?

Patients with temporal lobe epilepsy can have a normal life. To help your child:

- Make sure your child takes medicines as prescribed.
- Tell the doctor if you think a medicine is not working or notice anything different.

Some patients have trouble with memory and mood. Get help from specialists and therapists early on to support academic, social and emotional success.

Because it could lead to a tonic-clonic seizure, make sure that you and other adults and caregivers (family members, babysitters, teachers, coaches, etc.) know what to do if one happens. 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.

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](#)