

IS THERE TREATMENT FOR EPILEPSY?

Secondary epilepsy requires treatment of the underlying disease.

Treatment of primary epilepsy aims to control the frequency of fits. Infrequent fits may not require treatment.

Several medicines are available to treat epilepsy; your vet will choose the product or combination most appropriate for your pet.

Treatment will be lifelong and should not stop suddenly, this will lead to more severe fits.

It can take some time to optimise treatment. During this time your pet will need regular veterinary checks.

Your vet may need to take blood samples to ensure the dose of medication is correct for your pet.



Summary

It is rare for epileptic pets to completely stop having fits.

With medication the frequency of their fits can be controlled.

There is a good chance that they will live a full and happy life.



XLVets Small Animal member veterinary practices work together to share experience, knowledge and ideas to ensure the highest levels of quality and care for their client's pets. XLVet member practices provide a compassionate and caring service for all pets and at the same time offer comprehensive and up-to-date treatment in all fields of veterinary medicine and surgery.



Tyne Green, **Hexham**,
Northumberland, NE46 3SG.

T: 01434 608999
E: smallanimal@smvc.co.uk

29 High Street, **Tow Law**,
County Durham, DL13 4DH.

www.smvc.co.uk



T: 01388 731911
E: towlaw@smvc.co.uk



EPILEPSY



WHAT IS EPILEPSY?

Epilepsy is the term vets use if your pet is having repeated fits or seizures.

For many pets no specific cause of the fits can be found. Vets call this "primary" or "idiopathic" epilepsy. These patients appear normal between fits.

Fits can be caused by a problem elsewhere in your pet's body. Vets call this "secondary" epilepsy. These patients may show other problems between fits.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR PET HAS A FIT?

Some pets seem to know when they are going to have a fit and behave in a characteristic way.

- Unsettled
- Seeking company
- Panting

Fits can be limited to mild twitching of a single limb or be more severe.

- Loss of consciousness
- Rigid muscles, your pet may fall over
- Jerky paddling legs
- Rapid breathing
- Frothing mouth
- Screaming
- Loss of bladder control

Most fits are short and it is useful to time them. Because they are distressing, fits often appear much longer than they actually are.

After the fit, your pet will probably appear dazed. This period is usually brief, but can last over 24 hours.

- Between fits epileptics can live normal healthy lives.
- Fits are often more distressing for the owner than your pet
- During a fit try to keep calm
- Video an episode
- Treatment reduces the frequency of fits, it will not cure epilepsy

HOW IS EPILEPSY DIAGNOSED?

Epilepsy can affect any animal but is most common in young to middle aged pure breed dogs.

It is unlikely your vet will actually witness your pet having an episode so a detailed description is vital.

- Make notes of what happened before, during and after
- How long did it last
- Make a video
- Keep a diary of when and how often episodes occur

By listening to your description, thoroughly examining your pet and performing a series of blood tests, your vet will try to determine the cause of the fit. In some cases your vet may advise seeing a specialist or having a brain scan.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR PET HAS A FIT?

- KEEP CALM!
- Ensure your pet can not hurt itself; move objects that may fall and cause injury.
- Do not put your hand near your pets mouth
 - The animal will not swallow his tongue
 - You may get bitten
 - Stimulation from your touch may increase the length of the fit.
- Darken and quieten surroundings
 - Turn lights and TV off
 - Exclude children and other pets
- Contact your vet
 - Fits lasting over 5 minutes need immediate attention

