

Diet

There are no special dietary restrictions for epilepsy. The belief among rural folk in India that consuming cold items of food such as ice cream or fruits such as banana will cause seizures is a misconception. There is absolutely no truth in this.

Special diets such as the high fat diet known as “ketogenic diet” has been of some help in children with intractable epilepsy. However, this is costly and extremely difficult to follow. Also, the patient may not like this diet.

Surgery for epilepsy

Some people with epilepsy who do not respond to antiepileptic drugs may require brain surgery. This is possible in very few patients. It is essential that the specific area of brain responsible for their seizures is pinpointed by an abnormal MRI scan and correlated with the EEG abnormality. The removal of such a localized area may cure seizures in selected patients. The success of the operation depends upon proper patient selection. The surgery is expensive and labour-intensive, and available at only a few centres in India and Thailand.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy cannot cure epilepsy. However, some patients who experience seizures whenever they are tense or emotionally upset can be helped, such as a child who has seizures at the beginning of the school year. Psychotherapy can help such patients to understand the problem, to have a positive attitude and to control stress. Often, parents of children with epilepsy are extremely worried and require psychotherapy themselves.