### DISCLOSURE: When should I tell an employer I have epilepsy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Disclosure</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **ON A JOB APPLICATION** | • Honesty/peace of mind. 
• Easy. Lets employer decide if epilepsy is an issue. | • Might disqualify you with no opportunity to present yourself/your qualifications and no recourse. 
• Potential for discrimination. | • If you use this technique, you may have a harder time finding work, but usually have no epilepsy-related problems when you do. |
| **DURING AN INTERVIEW** | • Honesty/peace of mind. 
• Opportunity to respond briefly and positively—in person—to specific epilepsy issues. 
• Discrimination less likely face-to-face. | • Puts responsibility on you to handle epilepsy issues in a clear, non-threatening way. 
• Too much emphasis on issue indicates possible problem. 
• You are not being evaluated on your abilities. | • How comfortable are you with discussing your epilepsy? Are you too preoccupied with epilepsy? These are very difficult questions but ones that you can prepare to answer. |
| **AFTER THE INTERVIEW (when a job is offered but before you begin work)** | • Honesty/peace of mind. 
• If the epilepsy information changes the hiring decision, and you are sure that your seizures will not interfere with your ability to perform the job, there may be legal recourse. | • Employer might feel you should have told him before hiring decision was made. 
• Might lead to distrust with personnel department. | • Need to evaluate seizure condition honestly in light of the specific tasks of the job being applied for. 
• Need to be able to explain how epilepsy will not interfere with ability to perform job. This includes job safety. |
| **AFTER YOU START WORK** | • Opportunity to prove yourself on the job before disclosure. 
• Allows you to respond to epilepsy questions with peers at work. 
• If disclosure affects employment status and the condition doesn't affect ability to perform job or job safety, you may be protected by law. | • Nervousness or fear of having a seizure on the job. 
• Possible employer accusation of falsifying your application. 
• Possibility of a seizure before co-workers know how to react. 
• Could change interaction with peers. | • The longer you put off disclosing, the harder it becomes. 
• It may be difficult to identify who to tell. |
| **AFTER A SEIZURE ON THE JOB** | • Opportunity to prove yourself on job before disclosure. 
• If seizure affects employment status but the seizures do not affect your ability to perform your job or job safety, you may be protected by law. | • Possible employer accusation of falsifying your application. 
• Possibility that your co-workers will not have known how to react to your seizure. 
• Can perpetuate epilepsy myths & misunderstandings. | • Relationships you establish with co-workers may be hurt if they feel you have been untruthful with them. It may be difficult to re-establish trust. |
| **NEVER** | • Employer can't react to your epilepsy unless you have a seizure. | • If epilepsy is discovered, you run the risk of being fired. 
• Nervousness and fear of having a seizure on the job. If you have a seizure, you might be hurt by improper first aid. 
• Studies show that people who don't disclose have higher incidence of seizures on the job. 
• Can perpetuate epilepsy myths & misunderstandings. | • If you haven't had a seizure for a long time (over two years) the issues of disclosure become less critical. |

---

Reprinted from "The Work Book", a publication of Epilepsy Foundation of America's Training and Placement Service (TAPS) program, with permission.