

Epilepsy News

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Welcome to the new version of the Epilepsy News Ezine. We are hoping that by updating our look and technology we can better send you up-to-date information about epilepsy events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.



Please consult our website for further information: www.efnj.com.

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Quick Links

- [Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey](#)
- [The Family Resource Network](#)
- [The Family Support Center of NJ](#)

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Talk About it! @ Dinner - A New Way to Help a Worthy Cause - Epilepsy



The Epilepsy Foundation of America is pleased to announce the debut of a new nationwide fundraiser - Talk About It! @ Dinner! Throughout the year friends of the Epilepsy Foundation across the country will host dinner parties in their own homes to raise awareness and money for the Epilepsy Foundation and its mission. This is an exciting new way to turn a dinner party into an instant and effective fundraiser and public awareness campaign right in your own dining room.

Talk About It! @ Dinner is a great way to turn an average evening into a social event that is fun and meaningful in the lives of so many. Please look for more details on our [website](#) and in the March edition of Epilepsy News. For more information, contact Andrea Racioppi at aracioppi@efnj.com or by phone at (800) 336-5843.

The FDA Adds Suicide Warning to Epilepsy Medication

The Associated Press

Drugs used by millions of patients to control epileptic seizures must carry warnings about heightened risks of suicide, federal regulators said Tuesday. The Food and Drug Administration announcement comes almost a year after the agency first said patients taking the drugs have a slightly higher risk for suicide than those taking dummy pills.



According to the new language, only about 1 in 500 patients face an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behavior while taking the drugs. The new warning emphasizes that the risks are about the same among all antiseizure drugs.

The FDA advised patients to consult their doctor before making any changes to their treatment. The agency is also requiring manufacturers to distribute pamphlets that describe the risks for patients.

"All patients who are currently taking or starting on any antiepileptic drug for any indication should be monitored for notable changes in behavior that could indicate the emergence or worsening of suicidal thoughts or behavior or depression," FDA said in a statement.

The new warnings apply to 21 medications, including blockbuster products like GlaxoSmithKline's Lamictal, Johnson & Johnson's Topamax and Pfizer's Lyrica. The FDA stopped short of adding its sternest warning to the medications, as it had proposed earlier in the year.

In July a panel of outside experts recommended against adding the so-called "black box" warning, the strongest type available. Those experts and other physicians cautioned the agency that a boxed warning about suicide could alarm patients and cause them to stop taking their medications.

Antiseizure drugs are used for a variety of illnesses besides epilepsy, including migraines, certain nerve-pain disorders and psychiatric diseases such as bipolar disorder.

FDA Approves 2 New Drugs for the Treatment of Epilepsy

Eisai's BANZEL Approved as Adjunctive Treatment for Severe Epilepsy
Eisai Corporation of North America announced that the US Food and Drug Administration approved BANZEL (rufinamide) for the adjunctive treatment of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome (LGS) in children, 4 and older, and adults. Eisai received a complete response letter for BANZEL and the drug is now available.

A double-blind, placebo-controlled pivotal study of LGS patients treated with BANZEL as adjunctive therapy showed a 42.5% median reduction in frequency of drop attacks compared with a 1.4% median increase for placebo-treated patients.

"What's exciting about this study is that BANZEL was effective and generally well tolerated in children with LGS whose seizures were previously uncontrolled on other multiple antiepileptic medications," said Tracy Glauser, MD, Director Comprehensive Epilepsy Program, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Ohio.

For full prescribing information and more information about BANZEL, [click here](#).

UCB's Vimpat Approved as Adjunctive Therapy for Partial Onset Seizures in Adults
The FDA has approved Vimpat (lacosamide), a new antiepileptic drug for use as an add-on therapy for the treatment of partial onset seizures in people with epilepsy who are 17 years and older.

Steven S. Chung, MD, Director of Clinical Epilepsy Research at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix said, "Vimpat is unique because it works unlike any other antiepileptic drug that is currently available. It should be considered for epilepsy patients who have uncontrolled seizures with their current treatment regimen-no matter how many previous antiepileptic drugs they have tried."

Get Your Devils Tickets While They're Still Available!



Game day is quickly approaching, so get your seats to the Devils game while they last! See the NJ Devils take on the Florida Panthers at 1pm on Saturday, February 28th. The special ticket price is only \$45 (usually \$65) and Nathan's is also having a special Dollar Hot Dog Day!

Proceeds from the purchased tickets benefit The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey. [Click here](#) to download a flyer and reserve your tickets today!

The 5th Annual Mardi Gras Celebration is Coming!

The 5th Annual Mardi Gras Celebration benefiting The Family Resource Network and EFNJ will be held on March 12, 2009 at the Liberty House Restaurant in Jersey City, NJ. We are proud to announce that this year's "king" will be Joseph Fantozzi, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of White Rose Food. Join us in celebrating the wonder and excitement of Mardi Gras. Please contact Heather Comstock, Director of Resource Development at 609-392-4900 or [click here](#) for more information.



Support Ongoing Funding of the Family Support Center of New Jersey

If you've ever looked to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey for help finding resources, chances are you have spoken to a Support Coordinator from the Family Support Center of NJ. Over 2,600 families in New Jersey have reached out to FSCNJ for information on local epilepsy resources, however, with the economic downturn and the state struggling to set a budget, funding for services like information and referral could be cut. As a sister affiliate of the Family Support Center of New Jersey, EFNJ is asking that you show your support of this program by simply signing our [Online Petition](#) and forwarding the link to your family and friends. We sincerely appreciate your dedication and support.

Strike a Pose for Epilepsy!



On Saturday January 24, 2009, the Strike-A-Pose Organization hosted Networking for a Cause/Strike-A-Pose for Epilepsy at the beautiful Bobbi Brown Studio in Montclair. Strike-A-Pose fashion club was created to provide students with a real life experience of the fashion business. This event previewed the Spring/2009 Tommy Hilfiger collection, Spring/Summer 2009 accessories collection from Stacey Angela, and clothing from the Ruby Boutique. Proceeds from the event were donated to the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey.

Pictured: Heather Comstock, Director of Resource Development, FRN and Andrea Racioppi, Director of Epilepsy Services, EFNJ

The 3rd Annual National Walk for Epilepsy is Fast Approaching

Saturday, March 28, 2009, Washington, D.C.

The National Walk for Epilepsy will continue to bring attention to what epilepsy is and is not. As we walk together we will be sending a strong message to others across the nation that people with epilepsy are deserving of respect and are strong members of our community. Epilepsy deserves to be better understood!

If you are interested in joining our team you can go to www.walkforepilepsy.org and sign up under "Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey." Can't make it to the walk? You can still show your commitment by joining us for the Virtual Walk for Epilepsy. Donations can be sent via check to National Walk for Epilepsy, 8301 Professional Place, Landover, MD 20785. Please make sure to include Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey in the memo line of your check.

If you attending the walk and would like to meet up a the starting line with other walkers from New Jersey, please call Andrea Racioppi at 800.336.5843.

Thank you for reading Epilepsy News! if you have any questions about the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey, please contact me at aracioppi@efnj.com.

Sincerely,

Andrea Racioppi
Associate Director
Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey

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