

Epilepsy News

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Welcome to Epilepsy News. We pride ourselves at sending you the most 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.



Join our Mailing List!

Our Administrative Office has Moved!

Our new address is 1 AAA Drive, Trenton, NJ 08691

North Jersey Office

322 US Highway 46, Ste. 220
 Parsippany, NJ 07054
 (973) 244-0850

Central Jersey Office

2516 Highway 35
 Manasquan, NJ 08736
 (732) 528-8080

South Jersey Office

216 Haddon Avenue
 Suite 329
 Westmont, NJ 08108
 (856) 858-5900

Heads Up for Safety

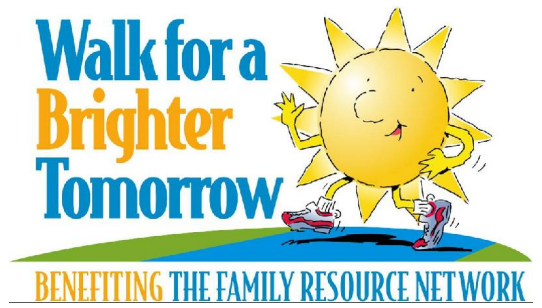
35 Beaverson Blvd.
 Building 11
 Brick, NJ 08723
 (732) 262-8020

Quick Links

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

Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey to Hold Walk-a-thon

Families have begun signing up their EFNJ walk teams, and it's time for you to join in on the fun! Join us on Sunday, October 11, 2009 as EFNJ and The Family Resource Network host a state-wide Walk-a-thon titled Walk for a Brighter Tomorrow at Roosevelt Park, in Edison, New Jersey. This will be a fun filled day for families and friends to walk in support of their loved ones. A casual 5k Walk, entertainment and refreshments will be just a few of the day's highlights.



So call your family, friends and co-workers and start a walk team today! You can find more information and register online at www.walkforabrightertomorrow.org or via phone 1-800-FRN-2345. When registering to walk please note that you can choose to direct all of your money raised specifically to EFNJ. Just choose EFNJ from the drop down menu on the online registration form.

Please join us in our continuing efforts to provide low-cost quality services to New Jersey families living with developmental disabilities and chronic illness. You can make a difference!

Promoting Independence: Considerations for Financial Planning, Housing and Decision Making

The Family Support Center of NJ presents Promoting Independence: Considerations for Financial Planning, Housing and Decision-Making Featuring attorneys of Hinkle, Fingles & Prior. Click [here](#) to download an informational flier.

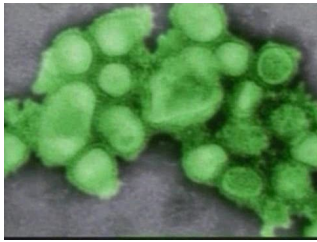
October 6, 2009
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
West Windsor Library
333 North Post Road
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550
609-275-8901

October 1, 2009
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Parsippany-Troy Hills Library
449 Halsey Road
Parsippany, NJ 08000
973-887-5150

October 20, 2009
6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
The Family Support Center of New Jersey
2516 Route 35 North
Manasquan, NJ 08736
732-528-8080

Registration is required, so please RSVP to Cheryl at 800-372-6510.

CDC Releases Report on Effects of Swine Flu in Children



Atlanta, Ga. Sept. 4, 2009--The CDC released a study today detailing the effects the swine flu (H1N1) has had on children in the United States. The study results were released in the Sept. 4, 2009, issue of CDC's publication, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

As of August 8, 2009, 477 deaths have been associated with 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in the United States, including 36 children younger than 18 years. Based on studies from previous influenza outbreaks, children aged younger than 5 years or with certain chronic medical conditions are at increased risk for complications and death from influenza. Sixty-seven percent of children who died had at least one chronic high-risk medical condition. Neurodevelopmental conditions, such as developmental delay, epilepsy and cerebral palsy, were the most frequently noted chronic medical conditions, reported in over 90 percent of children with a chronic medical condition. A number of children also had bacterial infections, including most children who were older than 5 years and did not have high-risk medical conditions. This finding suggests that bacteria, in combination with H1N1 influenza, can cause severe disease in children who may be otherwise healthy.

The CDC advises: Any child, even previously healthy children and especially those with chronic medical conditions, can have a severe illness or even death from 2009 Pandemic influenza A (H1N1). All children aged 6 months and older should receive 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) vaccine when it becomes available, and children with high-risk medical conditions should immediately consult with a health care provider if they develop an illness consistent with influenza.

To read the full report visit: www.cdc.gov/mmwr

Study Provides Insights into Autism and Epilepsy

Using funds from an Autism Speaks' grant, a team of researchers from Harvard University have uncovered the function of a gene known as LGI1, which was recently discovered to be linked to epilepsy. A mutation in LGI1 is the first genetic discovery that is clearly linked to partial epilepsy. Approximately 20% of individuals with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) also have epilepsy, with partial epilepsy being the most common form. Additionally, individuals with epilepsy who have the LGI1 mutation display language loss and impairment, resembling aspects of ASD. In the new studies, reported in the journal *Nature Medicine*, Matthew Anderson, M.D., Ph.D., and colleagues were able to show that the function of the LGI1 gene is to control the maturation of nerve cell signaling that occurs during the critical period of brain growth following birth. Although it's been known for a long time that nerve cells change the way they signal to each other in early postnatal life, the molecular processes that lead to this change in signaling have been unknown.

As the brain grows after birth, the underlying neuronal circuitry begins to change and mature. One particularly important feature during this critical maturation period is the sculpting of nerve cell connections, called synapses, that contain the excitatory neurotransmitter called glutamate. Anderson and his team found that when a mutation in LGI1 gene is present, synapses that use glutamate fail to mature to their final form. It is very possible that a similar process may contribute to partial epilepsy in autism.

These findings will provide a new avenue for scientists to gain an understanding of how nerve cell synapses develop and how that process may go awry. "By knowing the gene involved, we were able to model the mutation in mice, and this allowed us to find the biological impact of the mutation," explained Dr. Anderson. "Discovery that LGI1 mediates the process of excitatory synapse maturation during childhood brain development could provide insights into the cellular defects that underlie ASD, including epilepsy. Knowing the problem is the first step in being able to fix it.

"Reflections of the Heart" by Alyce Quinlan

Alyce Quinlan is a 23 years old college graduate who is Vice President of her sorority and employed as a teacher. She was diagnosed with epilepsy at 7 years old. It has had its effect on her throughout her life.

"Reflections of the Heart" is a collection of poetry written from raw emotions such as disappointment, love, heart break, epilepsy, etc. Every person that reads this can relate to at least one poem or feeling. Alyce feels that creative writing helps release a lot of her feelings about her epilepsy.

"Reflections of the Heart" is currently going through the process of being put online for Barnes and Noble and therefore is available right now for \$12.00 by emailing Alyce at alycequinlan@comcast.net.

SeizureTracker.com - A Valuable Tool

SeizureTracker.com is a free comprehensive tool to help understand relationships between seizure activity and anti-epileptic medications.

Seizure Tracker is an easy-to-use tool that allows patients to create personalized reports of logged seizure activity and medication history that can be easily shared with their medical team. This website empowers people with epilepsy to become active leaders in their own treatment, working hand-in-hand with doctors



The reports generated by SeizureTracker.com become a valuable communication aid when meeting with doctors because all the necessary information is in one brief report. With a simple keystroke, you can customize a report to outline any talking points you may have.

Children with Newly Diagnosed Epilepsy at Risk for Cognitive Problems

ST. PAUL, Minn. August 12 -Children who have normal IQs before they experience a first seizure may also have problems with language, memory, learning and other cognitive skills, according to a study published in the August 12, 2009, online issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Our study highlights the importance of testing children with epilepsy for possible cognitive problems soon after they are diagnosed with epilepsy in order to avoid these issues affecting them later in life, especially if they have additional risk factors," said study author Philip Fastenau, Ph.D., Professor of Neurology at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and the Neurological Institute of University Hospitals in Cleveland, Ohio. The research was done in collaboration with Indiana University Purdue University in Indianapolis and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

The study involved 282 school-aged children with an IQ of at least 70 who experienced their first seizure within the previous 3 months. They were then compared to 147 of their siblings without seizures. Scientists looked at whether the children with seizures also had other risk factors associated with cognitive problems, including multiple seizures, use of epilepsy drug, or signs of epilepsy on early tests of brain waves.

Of the children who experienced one seizure, 27 percent showed cognitive difficulties at or near the time of the first seizure and 40 percent of children who had additional risk factors showed signs of cognitive problems. A child with all four risk factors was three times more likely to experience cognitive problems by the first clinic visit compared to children who were seizure-free.

The study also showed that children who took epilepsy drugs had difficulties in processing speed, language, verbal memory and learning compared to children who did not take any epilepsy drugs.

"Children who take these medications should be closely monitored for cognitive problems resulting from the epilepsy drug," said Fastenau. "Surprisingly, our study also found academic achievement in these children was unaffected around the time of the first visit about three months after the first seizure in this study, suggesting there is a window early in epilepsy for intervention to avoid hurting a child's performance at school."

"Because this study found cognitive problems at the time of the first seizure or soon after, it provides strong evidence that these cognitive problems can be attributed to underlying brain abnormalities that lead to the epilepsy, rather than from extended exposure to epilepsy drugs or the effect of numerous seizures," said David Loring, Ph.D., of Emory University in Atlanta, who wrote an editorial accompanying the study.

The study was supported by the National Institutes of Health.

Talk About it @ Dinner



This year, National Epilepsy Awareness Month (NEAM) in November will celebrate the importance of sharing personal stories about epilepsy and building a movement where everyone impacted by epilepsy, directly or not, feels comfortable to Talk About It. NEAM will focus on the power of the personal story and the creative ways in which to encourage communities of all sizes to talk about epilepsy together.

EFNJ is asking you to consider hosting an "at-home" dinner party to raise awareness and money for the Epilepsy Foundation and its mission. Talk About it @ Dinner capitalizes on the enduring popularity of food oriented events and home entertaining. This initiative is both a valuable fundraiser and public awareness campaign all wrapped into one.

We are asking that families wishing to support the project to choose a date and host the event. Materials including invitations, foundation information, thank you cards and videos can be found at www.efnj.com. In order to participate, you simply need to fill out a registration form and fax it to 609-392-5621 or email it to Heather Comstock at hcomstock@efnj.com.

Please do not hesitate to call 609-392-4900 with any questions.

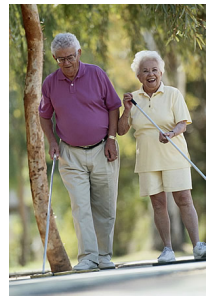
Thank you for your support!

EFNJ Looking for Hope Mentors

The H.O.P.E. Mentoring Program (Helping Other People with Epilepsy) offers education and support for individuals whose lives are touched by epilepsy. This program trains H.O.P.E. mentors who are "patient educators" in their communities. If you would like to become a H.O.P.E. Mentor, please contact Mimi Lencovich at mlencovich@efnj.com.

Seniors and Seizures

Through the Seniors and Seizures program, the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey will be conducting presentations for caregivers of seniors in an effort to educate them on seizure first aid and epilepsy. Seniors are one of the highest growing populations affected by seizures. If you or someone you know is interested in this training please contact Andrea Infante in our South Jersey office at 856.858.5900 x301 or ainfante@efnj.com.



Law Enforcement and Epilepsy Program

Through our Law Enforcement and Epilepsy program, law enforcement personnel will learn how they can reduce the risk of injury and a fatal outcome when they are able to properly identify seizure types and respond correctly. The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey offers free trainings for police departments. For further information or to schedule a training please contact Patti Reale in our Parsippany office at 973-244-0850 or preale@efnj.com.



Auto Donations

Are you thinking of selling or trading in that old car? Why not donate it instead? As a charitable contribution your vehicle donation could make a big difference. Our process is simple, quick and convenient and we will provide free and timely pick-up of your vehicle donation. Our program is simple ... The better the car, the greater your tax deduction.

To inquire about a donation please contact Samantha Griffiths at (609) 392-4900.

Thank you for reading Epilepsy News! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our listserv, please email me at aracioppi@efnj.com or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Andrea Racioppi
Associate Director
Epilepsy Foundation of NJ

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