A seizure is an event and epilepsy is the disease involving recurrent unprovoked seizures.

In past definitions, epilepsy was referred to as a disorder.

An epilepsy diagnosis is made when:

- At least two unprovoked (or reflex) seizures occur greater than 24 hours apart.
- One unprovoked (or reflex) seizure and a probability of further seizures similar to the general recurrence risk (at least 60%) after two unprovoked seizures, occurs over the next 10 years.

**Epilepsy is more common than you think**

- 3 million Americans and more than 65 million people worldwide
- 315,000 students in the United States, 12,000 in New Jersey
- More than 45,000 new cases are diagnosed annually in children
- 1 in 26 people will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime
- 1 in 10 people will have a seizure in their lifetime
- Epilepsy is more common than Cerebral Palsy, Parkinson’s Disease, Muscular Dystrophy, and Multiple Sclerosis combined

**Common Causes of Epilepsy**

For thirty percent (30%) of people with epilepsy there is a known cause:
- Brain trauma/injury
- Brain lesions (e.g. tumors)
- Poisoning (lead)
- Infections of the brain (e.g. meningitis, encephalitis, measles)
- Abnormal brain development

For the remaining seventy percent (70%) of people with epilepsy the cause is unknown (idiopathic epilepsy) or presumed to be genetic.
What is a Seizure?

A brief, excessive discharge of electrical activity in the brain that alters one or more of the following

- Movement
- Sensation
- Behavior
- Awareness

Seizure Triggers of Precipitants

Factors that might trigger or increase the likelihood of a seizure in a person with epilepsy include:

- Missed or late medication (#1 reason)
- Flashing Lights
- Stress/Anxiety
- Hyperventilation
- Lack of sleep/fatigue
- Hormonal changes
- Illness
- Alcohol or drug use
- Drug interactions (from prescribed or over the counter medicines)
- Overheating/overexertion
- Poor diet/missed meals
- Overall change in health
- Vaping

Seizure Types

Generalized Seizures

- Involve the whole brain
- Common types include generalized onset non-motor and tonic-clonic
- Symptoms may include convulsions, staring, muscle spasms and falls

Focal Seizures

- Involve only part of the brain
- Common types include focal onset and focal onset impaired
- Symptoms relate to the part of the brain affected

There are over 20 different types of seizures. People with epilepsy can have one type of seizure or several.