



**BC Epilepsy  
Society**

E-NEWSLETTER

*Improving lives.  
Inspiring courage.*

December 10, 2014

## **Help Support the BC Epilepsy Society**

### **HOLIDAY DONATIONS AND IN CELEBRATION GIFTS**

During this giving season, please consider making a donation to the BC Epilepsy Society. You can do this in many ways. You can give a donation in lieu of a gift or you can have guests for holiday events or parties bring a donation.

These can go a long way in helping the BC Epilepsy Society deliver programs, services, and resources to the nearly 40,000 British Columbians living with epilepsy.

2014 was the year of many new developments for us. This year we started an online support group, started an outreach program for adults with epilepsy at the Vancouver General Hospital Epilepsy Clinic, hosted lectures on new topics, and did 47 epilepsy awareness workshops for over 1070 people at schools, community organizations, and businesses. We participated in the Purple Day campaign by supporting events throughout the province and held a photo contest to celebrate this day. We also advocated nationally and provincially for government funding of new epilepsy medications, celebrated our 10th year working at the BC Children Hospital Neurology Clinic to support families, funded recreational activities for children, and gave out eight \$1000 post-secondary scholarships. Our commitment to epilepsy research in BC also continues with our funding of important studies on this topic.

Your donations allow us to continue to support, educate, and advocate for people with epilepsy in BC.

You can donate by:

- phone by calling our office at (604) 875-6704
- online at [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org)
- mail at #2500 – 900 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5Z 1E5

You can make your donation in a specific name or donate it to a specific program. Tax receipts are available.

For more information, please contact Shawn Laari at 604-875-6704 Ext. 12 or at [laari@bcepilepsy.com](mailto:laari@bcepilepsy.com)

Thank you for your support. We can't do it without you.

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## **Staying Healthy During the Holidays**

### **TIPS TO AVOID HOLIDAY STRESS**

The holiday season can be an overwhelming time for many people. This is particularly true when you or your loved one lives with the challenges of epilepsy. Below are some tips to help reduce the pressure of the holidays:

#### **1. Be realistic**

The holiday season is not about being "perfect". A lot of stress we put ourselves through comes from trying to match the unrealistic expectations that are often shown in magazines and on television. Your cookies might be misshapen, the gifts unwrapped, or the turkey overcooked, but it's the thought that counts.

#### **2. Ask for help**

Don't be embarrassed to ask for extra help. Share tasks with friends, family, or co-workers. If a celebration is being held at your home, delegate entertaining, cooking, and cleaning duties with attendees in advance.

#### **3. Keep a regular sleep, meal, and exercise schedule**

While it's fine to occasionally indulge in eggnog and late nights, don't use the holidays as an excuse to compromise your health. It is also very important to limit or avoid alcohol use, since this can make some people more likely to have seizures.

#### **4. Set a budget and stick with it**

A lot of holiday season stress derives from money worries. Set a budget and once you reach your spending limit, live within the boundaries and be grateful for the fact that you have as much as you do.

#### **5. Take time out for yourself.**

Take breaks from group activities. Do what relaxes you. Go for a walk, chat with a friend, or meditate. It's okay to not attend some holiday events or parties. Attend those that you really enjoy or that you know matter most.

It's important to focus on the traditions that make the holidays special for you. Be thankful for the family and friends that you have, the opportunities you've been given, and the future you can look forward to.

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# A New Definition of Epilepsy

## 2014 MEDICAL ADVANCEMENTS

As we look back throughout 2014, we see that this year has had many important medical developments related to epilepsy. What is considered to be the most notable advancement is the new clinical definition for epilepsy that was adopted by the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) in April.

This new definition is meant to provide a greater level of detail for clinicians to diagnose epilepsy. In particular, it is thought that this might lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment and therefore protect patients from further seizures.

According to the new definition, epilepsy is a disease of the brain defined by any of the following conditions:

- At least two unprovoked (or reflex) seizures occurring more than 24 hours apart; or
- One unprovoked (or reflex) seizure and a probability of further seizures similar to the general recurrence risk (at least 60%) after two unprovoked seizures, occurring over the next 10 years; or
- Diagnosis of an epilepsy syndrome.

This new definition also states that epilepsy is considered to be "resolved" for individuals who had an age-dependent epilepsy syndrome but are now past the applicable age or those who have remained seizure-free for the last 10 years, with no seizure medicines for the last 5 years.

Previously a commonly used definition of epilepsy had been two unprovoked seizures more than 24 hours apart. However, the word "provoked" seemed to imply that people who have seizures provoked by flashing lights or patterns did not have epilepsy. There are also some people who have had only one unprovoked seizure but also have other risk factors that make it very likely that they will have another seizure (this includes people who have an epilepsy syndrome). As well, the old definition did not allow for the possibility of "outgrowing" epilepsy. The new definition of epilepsy addresses these points.

The revised definition is not perfect. However, it will become more useful over time as more information is obtained about seizure recurrence risks. But for now, the new definition better reflects the way clinicians think about epilepsy. This in turn will have long-term implications for the research into and treatment of people with epilepsy. [Click here](#) to read a detailed article about these changes.

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## BC Epilepsy Society

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*The BC Epilepsy Society is a non-profit, charitable organization,  
which provides education, advocacy, and support.*