

Epilepsy

Can someone with epilepsy play rugby?

Many people with epilepsy are able to manage their condition through medication and lead a normal life. Participation in physical activity can have differing effects for people with epilepsy. For a few, strenuous exercise can increase the likelihood of a seizure occurring, but for many, exercising and participating in sports such as rugby provide many benefits including improved fitness and wellbeing, increased energy levels and stress relief, all of which can contribute to a reduction of seizures and the impact of epilepsy.

There is huge variation in how epilepsy and any medication can affect people and each case should be dealt with on an individual basis. Before participating in any rugby union activity an individual with epilepsy should seek medical advice from an appropriate specialist, particularly in relation to the risk of head impacts and concussion.



If under 18 then the player's parents/guardians should be asked by the club or school to confirm in writing that their child has been medically cleared to play. An adult player should also inform their club, with a record being kept. If epilepsy has been caused by a head injury then playing contact sport is generally not advised, and touch or tag rugby may be an appropriate alternative.

Where considered appropriate for an individual to participate, good communication between the player, parent/guardian(s), coaches, first aiders and other key personnel is important so that everyone is clear what (if any) particular precautions are taken to prevent or manage any seizures should they occur during rugby games or training. Coaches should consider using different methods and approaches to ensure that the experience is a positive one for the player and others involved.

Further Information

More information and further guidance is available from the [Epilepsy Society](#).



The NHS provides comprehensive health information and guidance. Call 111 for non-emergency medical advice or visit the [NHS website](#).



Any advice provided by the RFU in relation to specific injuries, illnesses or disabilities is only general advice and it should not be used as a substitute for the individual advice patients receive when they consult their own doctor. Individuals are advised to consult their own General Practitioner or Hospital Consultant for specific advice on their condition and/or fitness to train for or play rugby