


Aspiration with convulsions is common, but can be prevented by turning the head to one side as the convulsion ends.

### DISCONTINUING ANTIEPILEPTIC DRUGS

Many patients with epilepsy become seizure-free on medication for an extended period of time. Some patients can discontinue antiepileptic drugs without a relapse. Successful drug withdrawal is most likely if initial seizure control was readily achieved using monotherapy, there were relatively few seizures before remission, and the EEG and neurological examination are normal just before the AEDs are tapered off. A seizure-free interval of at least 2 years is important to reduce the likelihood of relapse; some advocate that seizure-freedom should be present for at least 5 years unless the epilepsy syndrome is known to remit (e.g., CAE or BECTS). Conversely, risk of relapse is high if seizure control was difficult to establish and required polytherapy, if there were frequent convulsions before control was achieved, a focal abnormality is present on neurological examination, or if the EEG demonstrates focal disturbances of background activity or epileptiform activity at the time AED withdrawal is considered.

 For a deeper discussion of this topic, please see Chapter 403, "The Epilepsies," in Goldman-Cecil Medicine, 25th Edition.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

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