

### Patient Perspective: How Epilepsy Affected My Life by Abby Hamer

"If the plan doesn't work, change the plan but never the goal." This quote is what helped me through hard times after being diagnosed with epilepsy. My name is Abby Hamer. I am 16 years old. I live in Montevallo, Alabama, and I am a junior at Montevallo High School. I was diagnosed with epilepsy six years ago. I have been seizure free for two-and-a-half years. I am very happy to say we are in the process of taking me off the seizure medicine I have been required to take every day.

The first thing I want to say is thank you to my amazing doctor and nurse, Dr. Monisha Goyal and Ashley Key. They have done so much for me through this time of my life, and they do not know how much they mean to me and to my family.

Having epilepsy has really impacted my life, some good but mostly bad. When I had my first seizure, I questioned, "Why did this have to happen to me? None of my other friends have seizures — they are all normal." Having seizures made me feel different, but through all of the bad times, I never gave up. Being diagnosed with this terrible disease has brought my family closer together, because we never knew what would happen next.

It also taught me not to take things for granted, because things in my life could be a lot worse. It has also brought new opportunities, such as helping other people who are going through a tough time and meeting wonderful people at Children's of Alabama. During the bad times of having epilepsy, I never let it knock me down because I knew I was stronger and could get past this. Some of my struggles have been taking medicine, the side effects from the medicine, having EEGs and missing out on things with friends. The worst thing that happened was hearing them say that I might not be able to drive. It broke my heart when I heard that. We prayed, and Dr. Goyal adjusted my medicine until my seizures were under control. The best news ever was hearing Dr. Goyal say that I was cleared to drive.

So through this tough journey, I think having epilepsy has impacted my life for the better. I have always told my mom, "Having seizures could happen to anyone at any time, but I am not going to worry because I know God has a plan for my life every step of the way, and God never gives you something you can't handle and overcome."

Last but not least, I want to thank my family and friends, because I could not have done it without them and their support. God blessed me with the best doctor that cares about me and my situation, and also had faith in me the whole time. My favorite Bible verse is Luke 1:37 "For nothing is impossible with God." (NLT)

