Understanding epilepsy, nodding syndrome and the importance of medication

**WHY?**

Seizures can be caused by a condition called ‘Epilepsy’. This is not contagious, it is not a spirit that possesses the person. Medication might be needed to control the seizures. Ask a doctor for advice.

Seizures can also be due to ‘Nodding Syndrome’ and often accompanied with repetitive nodding (dropping down) of the head, and/or staring spells. Nodding Syndrome is infectious and its cause unknown. This condition can affect physical and intellectual growth, and lead to injuries or death related to seizures. **In case of Nodding Syndrome symptoms, consult a doctor.**

**HOW?**

- **Symptoms:**
  - Shaking
  - Confused speech
  - Fumbling
  - Wandering
  - Blank staring
  - Chewing & biting

**WHAT?**

- **Take the person to a health centre to see a doctor immediately when:**
  - Seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
  - When seizure repeats
  - Person is injured or sick
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Seizure occurs in water
  - First time seizure
With appropriate medication, a person can function normally, go to school or work, play and be included in the community.

- Give appropriate, prescribed epileptic medication at the right time
- Make sure to refill the epilepsy medication in time so there are not gaps in taking medication
- Keep the medicine in a safe and dry place

Keep an eye on changing behaviour of the person with epilepsy this might mean there is a problem.
- Irregular bed time
- Swimming alone
- Climbing high things