



**Heather O.  
Bellevue, NE  
Born in 1983  
Diagnosed in 1984**

*"I am determined not to let epilepsy control me or hold me back."*

Heather is seizure-free after more than 20 years of having epilepsy. She is a true survivor enduring a number of medications, doctors and operations.

Heather had her first seizure when she was only 18 months old. She was diagnosed with Juvenile Myoclonic Epilepsy (JME) in high school, and experienced myoclonic seizures. She was having multiple seizures at school, requiring paramedics at least once a month. Trying different medications all of the time made her so sick that the nurse's office became her second home.

As she graduated from high school and went on to college, Heather's seizures were growing worse, and she felt like giving up. She continued to work and go to school, but she was beginning to lose hope. After finding an epilepsy center and an epileptologist, she finally found a combination of medications that worked. She gained control over her seizures and eventually became seizure-free.

Heather and her mother started the first Epilepsy Support group in Nebraska, and one day she hopes to start an Epilepsy Foundation affiliate here, too. She tells her story to build awareness about epilepsy, which included an appearance in a video called "Triumph over Epilepsy." Telling her story helps Heather heal and learn from her own disabilities. Having epilepsy has helped mold the person she is today and she would never change the way her life has turned out.

As an Epilepsy Advocate, Heather hopes sharing her personal experience will build further awareness and understanding on living well with epilepsy.