

Epilepsy Emergency Procedures

First aid for seizures is quite simple, and can help prevent a child/young person from being harmed by a seizure. First aid will depend on the individual child/young person's epilepsy and the type of seizure they are having. Some general guidance is given below, but most of all it is important to keep calm and know where to find help.

Tonic-clonic seizures

Symptoms:

- + the person loses consciousness, the body stiffens, then falls to the ground
- + this is followed by jerking movements
- + a blue tinge around the mouth is likely, due to irregular breathing
- + loss of bladder and/or bowel control may occur
- + after a minute or two the jerking movements should stop and consciousness slowly returns.

Do . . .

- + protect the person from injury – (remove harmful objects from nearby)
- + cushion their head
- + look for an epilepsy identity card or identity jewellery. These may give more information about a pupil's condition, what to do in an emergency, or a phone number for advice on how to help
- + once the seizure has finished, gently place them in the recovery position to aid breathing
- + keep calm and reassure the person
- + stay with the person until recovery is complete.

Don't . . .

- + restrain the pupil
- + put anything in the pupil's mouth
- + try to move the pupil unless they are in danger
- + give the pupil anything to eat or drink until they are fully recovered.
- + attempt to bring them round.

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Call for an ambulance if . . .

- + you believe it to be the pupil's first seizure
- + the seizure continues for more than five minutes
- + one tonic-clonic seizure follows another without the person regaining consciousness between seizures
- + the pupil is injured during the seizure
- + you believe the pupil needs urgent medical attention.

Seizures involving altered consciousness or behaviour

Simple partial seizures

Symptoms:

- + twitching
- + numbness
- + sweating
- + dizziness or nausea
- + disturbances to hearing, vision, smell or taste
- + a strong sense of déjà-vu.

Complex partial seizures

Symptoms:

- + plucking at clothes
- + smacking lips, swallowing repeatedly or wandering around
- + the person is not aware of their surroundings or of what they are doing.

Atonic seizures

Symptoms:

- + sudden loss of muscle control causing the person to fall to the ground. Recovery is quick.

Myoclonic seizures

Symptoms:

- + brief forceful jerks which can affect the whole body or just part of it
- + the jerking could be severe enough to make the person fall.

Absence seizures

Symptoms:

- + the person may appear to be daydreaming or switching off. They are momentarily unconscious and totally unaware of what is happening around them.

Do . . .

- + guide the person away from danger

- + look for an epilepsy identity card or identity jewellery. These may give more information about a person's condition, what to do in an emergency, or a phone number for advice on how to help.
- + stay with the person until recovery is complete
- + keep calm and reassure the person
- + explain anything that they may have missed.

Don't . . .

- + restrain the person
- + act in a way that could frighten them, such as making abrupt movements or shouting at them
- + assume the person is aware of what is happening, or what has happened
- + give the person anything to eat or drink until they are fully recovered
- + attempt to bring them round.

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Call for an ambulance if . . .

- + one seizure follows another without the person regaining awareness between them
- + the person is injured during the seizure
- + you believe the person needs urgent medical attention.

Do not cancel an ambulance once called, even if the pupil's condition appears to have improved.