

Epilepsy and Seizure First Aid for School Nurses

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder that causes a person to have 2 or more recurrent, unprovoked seizures in their lifetime.

Types of seizures and their symptoms

A seizure occurs when there is brief excessive electrical activity in the brain. While there are more than 20 different kinds of seizures the most common are:

Generalized (affects the whole brain)		Partial (affects part of the brain)	
Absence	Tonic Clonic	Simple Partial	Complex Partial
Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blank dazed stare Sometimes blinking and chewing motion Lasts a few seconds 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of consciousness Muscle rigidity Convulsions Lasts 1-3 mins 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full consciousness Jerking of one part of the body Sensory experiences Possible feeling of fear or insecurity 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered consciousness Being out of touch with surroundings Random and purposeless activities which may include picking at clothing and/or aimless walking Lasts 1 -3 mins
What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed Document in Seizure Observation record 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn person on side Remove objects/glasses Use something soft under head Stay calm & stay with the person Time seizure 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed 	What to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm and reassure others Track time Check for medical I.D. Do not restrain Gently direct away from hazards Stay until they are fully alert and aware If seizure lasts 5 minutes or another seizure begins before full consciousness is achieved, follow the emergency protocol

A seizure is an emergency in the following scenarios:

- A first time seizure
- A convulsive seizure lasting more than 5 minutes
- Repeated seizures without regaining consciousness
- More seizures than usual or change in type
- Person is injured, has diabetes or is pregnant
- Seizure occurs in water
- Normal breathing does not resume
- Parents request emergency evaluation

Treatments

For many persons with Epilepsy one or more of the following are able to help them in controlling seizures: Anti-seizure medication, surgery, Vagus Nerve Stimulator (VNS), Responsive Neuro stimulation (RNS), Ketogenic diet and medical marijuana.

Tools to assist in caring for students with Epilepsy:

Seizure Observation Record

- To be completed by school personnel when reporting a seizure(s).
- Helps to identify seizure triggers, patterns and precautions

Questionnaire for a parent of a student with seizures

- To be completed by parents of students with seizures.
- Can be difficult to get parent(s) to complete this form and may take persistence. May also require you to interview the parent(s) to clarify information
- Update annually or when any changes occur

Seizure Action Plan

- To be completed by the school nurse
- Provides basic information about student's seizures, seizure first aid and emergency response
- Distribute to relevant school personnel at the beginning of a school year, when a diagnosis is made or when a change in health status occurs
- Should generally be signed and approved by the treating physician

