

First Aid for Seizures

(Convulsions, generalized tonic-clonic, grand mal)

Although most seizures end naturally without emergency treatment, a seizure in someone who does not have epilepsy could be a sign of serious illness. Call for medical assistance if:

- seizure lasts for more than 5 minutes
- you find no “epilepsy/seizure disorder” ID
- slow recovery, a second seizure, or difficult breathing afterwards
- pregnancy or other medical ID
- any signs of injury

Handling Partial Seizures

Simple partial seizures don't require any special response except to recognize what's happening and be supportive when the seizure is over.

For complex partial seizures, the following steps may help

Remove hazards or anything from the area that might injure someone who doesn't know where he is or what he's doing.

Reassure others. Explain that any unusual behavior is a temporary condition brought on by a seizure and that it will end in a few minutes.

Don't restrain the person during a complex partial seizure, especially if he or she is already agitated and confused. Efforts to restrain may produce an unconscious aggressive response.

Guide gently away from or block access to anything that could be dangerous to someone in a semi-conscious state, like an open fire or a busy street.

Stay back until the episode has ended if the person appears obviously agitated or belligerent.

Be reassuring and helpful as awareness returns. Remember that people may get back their ability to hear and understand before they are able to speak again. Confusion, depression, agitation, irritability, belligerence or drowsiness are all possible after effects of seizures.

Watch the time. Most partial seizures last a minute or two. But people may feel confused for up to half an hour afterwards. Longer periods of confusion may mean that seizure activity is continuing and the person needs medical help.

Web site Sources

Epilepsy: www.efa.org

Diabetes: www.diabetes.org

Health/First Aid info: www.healthy.net/clinic/flrstald

Asthma: www.iungusa.org

Cerebral Palsy: www.cerebraipalsyinfocenter.com

Disability Fact Sheets: www.pcentral.com