



For information, please contact the Jamaican Epilepsy Association c/o Andrews Memorial Hospital, 27 Hope Road, Kingston 10, Tel: (876) 968-8274 E-mail: jaepilepsy@cwjamaica.com or jaepilepsy@gmail.com

Seizure Types and First aid

You may have seen someone having a seizure and not even realized it. A seizure can look like many different things and have many different symptoms. About 1 out of 12 people will have a seizure during their lifetime. Anyone, whether they are young, old, healthy, or otherwise could have a seizure. There are over 20 different seizure types. A person with epilepsy (recurring seizures) may experience one kind of seizure or many different kinds. The kind of seizure a person has depends on which part and how much of the brain is affected by the electrical disturbance that produces seizures. Knowing how to recognize seizures and what to do will help keep a person safe.

Generalized Seizures

Seizure Type	Seizure Symptoms	Postictal (post-seizure) Symptoms	First Aid/What to Do
Absence (Petit Mal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blank stare• Loss of awareness• Pause in activity• Possible eyelid fluttering• Begin and end abruptly• Usually last 2 to 15 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No recollection of seizure• Promptly resumes activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeat or provide any information that the person may have missed
Tonic-Clonic (Grand Mal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abrupt loss of consciousness• Falling• Stiffening of body• Jerking – affects the whole body• Shallow breathing or drooling may occur• Skin may become pale or bluish• Usually end within 3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No recollection of seizure• Confusion• Headache• Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect head from injury• Move objects away• Gently turn on side to keep airway clear• Do not restrain• Do not put anything in the mouth (this could cause choking or break teeth)• Be friendly and reassuring as consciousness returns• Call ambulance if the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes, there is no known history of seizures, or if injured
Atonic (Drop Attacks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abrupt loss of consciousness• Sudden loss of muscle tone (head drops, collapse)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No recollection of seizure• Generally quick recovery within 1 minute	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call ambulance if injuries are suspected
Myoclonic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No loss of consciousness• Rapid brief muscle contractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promptly resumes activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer reassurance and assistance

Partial Seizures

Seizure Type	Seizure Symptoms	Postictal (post-seizure) Symptoms	First Aid/What to Do
Simple Partial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No loss of consciousness• Sensory symptoms (smell, sound, or visual distortion, or tingling), or• Psychic symptoms (feelings of fear, déjà vu, or hallucinations), or• Changes in muscle activity (twitching)• Usually last 10 seconds to 2 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible short-term period of weakness or loss of sensation• May progress into a tonic-clonic or complex partial seizure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer reassurance and assistance
Complex Partial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consciousness is impaired• Often starts with a blank stare• Repetitive purposeless actions, such as: hand wringing, lip smacking, wandering, or nonsensical speech• Movements are clumsy or disoriented• Usually last 1 to 3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No recollection of seizure• Confusion• Fatigue• May progress into a tonic-clonic seizure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak calmly• Gently guide person away from possible hazards• Stay with the person until they regain full awareness• Don't restrain the person unless essential for safety• Offer to call a taxi, friend, or relative to help• If full consciousness does not return, call an ambulance

About Epilepsy

"Most people don't know anything about epilepsy. If you mention it to someone, it's not unusual to hear, "Isn't that what makes you shake?" It's kind of sad, actually, because epilepsy is one of the most prevalent disorders in the world. Many people don't understand epilepsy -- and this lack of knowledge leads to very negative stereotypes like: People with epilepsy are crazy; People with epilepsy can't hold jobs; or People with epilepsy are dangerous to themselves and others. These are all simply not true. If more people knew the basics about epilepsy, it wouldn't be feared. It's time we all looked around and learned more about a condition that can affect anyone, in any place, at any time.

The brain is the computer that runs our body, and like computers, our brains run on electricity. The electricity is produced by the cells that make up the brain. These cells (called neurons) produce just enough power for us to know what is going on around us and for us to do and think what we want. In some people, the neurons produce a power surge or unexpected burst of excess electricity. This sudden electrical burst overloads the brain and briefly interferes in how it works. When this happens, the person experiences a seizure. If it happens more than once the person is diagnosed as having epilepsy.

The electrical burst can happen in just a part of the brain or it can cover the entire brain. If only part of the brain is involved, the person has a "partial seizure" – the part of the brain that is overwhelmed can't function as it normally does, so the person might not be able to talk for a few moments or they might have a sudden arm or leg jerk. If the seizure affects the whole brain, then the person's muscles will tense up and they may fall to the floor and convulse. This is what many people think about when they think epileptic seizure.

Call 119 if the seizure last for more than 10 minutes or transport the person to the nearest hospital.....