

Epilepsy and Seizure First Aid for school personnel

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder characterized by a tendency to have recurrent unprovoked seizures. Epilepsy is the most common neurological disorder in children.

Types of seizures and their impact on students

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 seen in students are:

Generalized (affects the whole brain)		Focal (affects part of the brain)	
Absence	Tonic Clonic	Focal Aware	Focal Impaired Awareness
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 if:

- It is a first time seizure
- A convulsive seizure lasts 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

Impact on learning and behavior

A student's learning and behavior can be affected by Epilepsy whether due to short term memory problems, side effects of their medication or seizure activity. Students with Epilepsy are more likely to suffer low self-esteem. School difficulties are not always Epilepsy related.

How can I help my students with Epilepsy succeed socially and academically?

- Stay calm during seizure episodes
- Know child's medications and their possible side effects
- Have a copy of the child's seizure action plan
- Discuss the seizure action plan in the student's IEP
- Some lessons may have to be retaught to them
- Encourage positive peer interaction and be supportive
- Avoid overprotection and encourage independence
- Include the student in as many activities as possible
- Communicate with parents about child's seizure activity, behavior and learning problems