

# Seizure First Aid

Seizures are common and most stop by themselves. Know how to help.

## First aid for any type of seizure

Here are things you can do to help someone who is having this type of seizure:

- Ease the person to the floor.
- Turn the person gently onto one side. This will help the person breathe.
- Clear the area around the person of anything hard or sharp. This can prevent injury.
- Put something soft and flat, like a folded jacket, under his or her head.
- Remove eyeglasses.
- Loosen ties or anything around the neck that may make it hard to breathe.
- **Time the seizure.** Call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes. (One person takes the lead and instructs another to start a timer and call for help - like school nurse and administration.)

## Stop! Do NOT

Knowing what NOT to do is important for keeping a person safe during or after a seizure.



Never do any of the following things

- Do not hold the person down or try to stop his or her movements.
- Do not put anything in the person's mouth. This can injure teeth or the jaw. A person having a seizure cannot swallow his or her tongue.
- Do not try to give mouth-to-mouth breaths (like CPR). People usually start breathing again on their own after a seizure.
- Do not offer the person water or food until he or she is fully alert.

## **Generalized tonic-clonic (grand mal) seizures**

When most people think of a seizure, they think of a generalized tonic-clonic seizure, also called a grand mal seizure. In this type of seizure, the person may cry out, fall, shake or jerk, and become unaware of what's going on around them.

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## Other types of seizures.

Not all seizures involve convulsions/jerking. Sometimes they will just stare into space and do not respond. Oftentimes they drool. If you observe any abnormal type seizure behavior, ease them to the floor and remove nearby objects for safety and call the school nurse and administration immediately. Do not leave the person.

## These are general steps to help someone who is having any type seizure:

- Follow the steps above until the seizure has ended and do not forget to time the seizure. The school nurse and administration will take over on arrival. Also, have another person remove all observers not involved in caring for the person having a seizure. They do not need an audience.
- Stay with the person until the seizure ends and he or she is fully awake. After it ends, help the person sit in a safe place. Once they are alert and able to communicate, tell them what happened in very simple terms.
- Comfort the person and speak calmly.
- Check to see if the person is wearing a medical bracelet or other emergency information.
- Keep yourself and other people calm.
- Offer to call a taxi or another person to make sure the person gets home safely.

Stay with the person until the seizure ends and he or she is fully awake.

There are many types of seizures. Most seizures end in a few minutes.

**Do I call 911?** (At school, this call will most often be made by the school nurse or administration; however, it is good information to have.)

Seizures do not usually require emergency medical attention. Most seizures stop by themselves. Only call 911 if one or more of these are true:

- The person has never had a seizure before to the best of your knowledge.
- The person has difficulty breathing or waking after the seizure.
- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- The person has another seizure soon after the first one.
- The person is hurt during the seizure.
- The seizure happens in water.

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- The person has a health condition like diabetes, heart disease, or is pregnant.