

Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

Seizure Disorder

Health Information Fact Sheet #2

Seizures are episodes of disturbed brain activity which can affect one part or multiple parts of the brain. **Epilepsy** is a disorder of the brain, characterized by recurrent seizures (uncontrolled body movements).

Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.

Some Facts about Seizures & Epilepsy:

- Individuals with developmental disabilities are more likely to have seizures or epilepsy due to underlying brain conditions.
- Seizures vary in appearance and severity depending on where it starts in the brain.

Risk Factors (Causes):

Recognition of the following conditions will help alert you to potential risks:

- A diagnosis of seizures/epilepsy or taking medications for such a diagnosis
- A history of seizures within the past five (5) years
- Brain injuries
- Conditions with the brain since birth
- Brain tumor(s)
- Blood vessel swelling, bleeding, or damage in the brain

The Seizure Disorder Fact Sheet is #2 in a series of Health Information Fact Sheets compiled by DDD Health Care Services.

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What to Watch For:

Symptoms vary from person to person, depending on the type of seizure. Some have staring spells while others may shake violently.

What to Do/Prevention:

- *Provide healthy foods/drinks & plenty of sleep*
- *Establish a low stress environment*
- *Keep record of any seizure activity*
 - document the length of each seizure
 - provide a description of the seizure
 - give documentation to doctor at follow-up appointments to determine effectiveness of medication
 - ask doctor if seizure protocol should be implemented (or PRN medications)
- *Ensure caregivers are trained in CPR & first aid training for seizures*

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What to Do During Seizure:

- Stay with the member
- Do not place anything in the member's mouth
- Do not restrain the member
- Move objects away to prevent injury
- If possible, provide padding under individual's member's head/arms/legs
- Only move the member if they are in an unsafe area, which could cause more injury, such as roadway or a stairwell
- Keep member's head above water if in a bathtub or swimming pool

What to Do After Seizure:

- Turn member on his/her side to prevent possible choking/vomiting
- Loosen any tight clothing & check for injuries
- Allow quiet time to recover from the seizure
- Check on member every 15 minutes to make sure he/she is breathing normally
- Document seizure

Emergency

Call 9-1-1 when:

- It is the member's *first seizure*
- They *do not breathe normally* after seizure
- *Seizure lasts more than 5 minutes* (or time specified by doctor)
- *Two or more seizures* without recovering between seizures (if doctor has not provided direction)
- *Seizure occurs during eating, swimming, or bathing* and the member may have *aspirated* (sucked food or fluids into lungs)
- An *injury occurred* during seizure that requires medical attention the member cannot be awakened 2 hours after seizure (or time specified by doctor)

