HEALTH INFORMATION FACT SHEET #2
Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information; not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

SEIZURE DISORDER

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
Quality Assurance Unit • 602-771-8122

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).

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.

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.

RISK FACTORS (Alerts)

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 or issues with the brain since birth
- brain tumor(s)
- blood vessel swelling, bleeding, or damage in the brain

WHAT TO DO • PREVENTION

- GIVE SEIZURE MEDICATION ON TIME
- PROVIDE HEALTHY FOODS/DRINKS & PLENTY OF SLEEP
- ESTABLISH A LOW STRESS ENVIRONMENT
- KEEP RECORD of any seizure activity
  - ☑ document the length of 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

WHAT TO DO • During Seizure

- STAY WITH THE INDIVIDUAL
- DO NOT PLACE ANYTHING IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S MOUTH
- DO NOT RESTRAIN THE INDIVIDUAL
- MOVE OBJECTS AWAY TO PREVENT INJURY
- IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE PADDING UNDER INDIVIDUAL'S HEAD/ARMS/LEGS
- ONLY MOVE THE INDIVIDUAL IF IN AN UNSAFE AREA, which could cause more injury, such as roadway or a stairwell
- KEEP INDIVIDUAL'S HEAD ABOVE WATER if in a bathtub or swimming pool

WHAT TO DO • After Seizure

- TURN INDIVIDUAL 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 INDIVIDUAL every 15 minutes to make sure he/she is breathing normally
- DOCUMENT SEIZURE

EMERGENCY

Call 9-1-1 when:

- it is the individual'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 INDIVIDUAL MAY HAVE ASPIRATED (sucked food or fluids into lungs)
- an INJURY OCCURRED during seizure that requires medical attention
- the individual cannot be awakened 2 hours after seizure (or time specified by doctor)

THE SEIZURE DISORDER FACT SHEET #2 in a series of HEALTH INFORMATION FACT SHEETS compiled by the DDD Quality Assurance Unit. Fact Sheets #1-#4 are based on the "FATAL FOUR" as referred to by the Oregon Department of Health Services Developmental Disabilities Nursing Manual. Fact Sheets are available upon request and posted on the Division's Website: https://www.azdes.gov/developmental_disabilities/ (Click on "News & Events"). Issued April 2012

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To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities ADA Coordinator at (602) 542-0419 or 1-866-229-5553 (Outside Maricopa County); TTY/TTD Services: 7-1-1.