

First Aid for Seizures

It is most important to protect a person from harm during a seizure. Here are some tips:

What to do during a Generalized Tonic Clonic Seizure (Grand Mal Seizure)

- Stay calm and keep track of time.
- Look for medical identification.
- Protect from nearby hazards.
- Loosen any tight clothing, like tie or collar.
- Cushion head to protect from injury.
- Turn on side to keep airway clear unless injury exists. Reassure as consciousness returns.
- If single seizure lasted less than 5 minutes, ask if hospital evaluation wanted.
- If multiple seizures, or if one seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, call an ambulance.
- Stay with person until he/she regains consciousness.

What NOT to do during a seizure

- Do NOT put anything in a person's mouth during a seizure. This could injure their jaw and gums or break their teeth.
- Do NOT hold them down or restrain them.
- Do NOT attempt to give them oral medication or anything to drink during a seizures.
- Do NOT try to "shake the person out of it".

What to do during a Focal Impaired Awareness Seizure (Complex Partial)

- Speak calmly and reassuringly to person having the seizure and to others around them.
- Guide gently away from obvious hazards.
- Stay with person until completely aware of environment.
- Offer to help afterwards, including helping them to get home.

What to do during Myoclonic Seizures

- No first aid is needed, but the person should be given a thorough medical evaluation.

When is a Seizure an Emergency?

- First time seizure (no known history of seizures).
- Convulsive seizure lasts more than 5 minutes.
- Person is having repeated seizures without regaining consciousness.
- There has been a change in frequency or type of seizure activity.
- Person is injured, has diabetes or is pregnant.
- Normal breathing doesn't resume.
- Seizure occurs in water.