

Seizure and Epilepsy Education

Information that will help in your recovery.

What is a seizure and what is epilepsy (seizure disorder)?

A seizure is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain that affects how a person appears or acts for a short time. Epilepsy is generally diagnosed when two or more unprovoked seizures have occurred or if the patient is at high risk to have more seizures.

Common symptoms of a seizure:

- Uncontrollable muscle spasms with twitching and jerking limbs.
- Drooling or frothing at the mouth.
- Irregular eye movements.
- Grunting and snorting.
- Loss of bladder or bowel control.
- Brief blackout followed by a period of confusion.

Common causes of recurrent seizures:

- Missing seizure medicines
- Too much stress
- Lack of sleep
- Drug or alcohol abuse or withdrawal
- Medicines that make it easier for you to have a seizure (for example: bupropion, tramadol, etc.)
- Very high or very low sodium or sugar in the blood

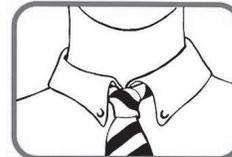
Treatment:

- Patients don't usually begin to take medicine following the first unprovoked seizure. A neurologist will evaluate the patient and recommend the best treatment.
- For patients with more than one unprovoked seizure, a specialist will do a careful evaluation and recommend a treatment plan.

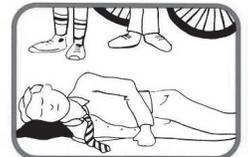
First Aid for Seizures



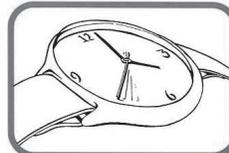
Cushion head, remove glasses



Loosen tight clothing



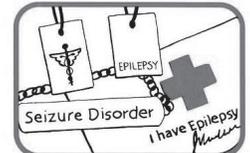
Turn on side



Time the seizure with a watch



Don't put anything in mouth



Look for I.D.



Don't hold down



As seizure ends...



...offer help

How to Care for Yourself after a Seizure

Information
that will help
in your
recovery.

Things to avoid that may trigger another seizure:

- Missing a dose of antiseizure medicines or not taking them as ordered.
- Lack of sleep.
- Alcohol.
- Too much stress.
- Medicines that make it easier for you to have a seizure (for example: bupropion, tramadol, etc.)
- Skipping meals or not drinking enough liquids.
- Uncontrolled diabetes.

How to Care for yourself at home:

- Don't panic. Most seizures only last a few minutes.
- Try to avoid falling or hurting yourself. Have someone help you to the floor. Clear sharp objects.
- Cushion your head.
- Loosen the clothes around your head and neck.
- Turn on your side to avoid swallowing saliva or vomit.
- Time how long the seizure lasts.
- Have someone stay with you until you feel better or until medical help arrives.

Call 911 if:

- A seizure lasts more than 5 minutes.
- You do not wake up
- You don't act normally after a seizure.
- One seizure occurs right after another without you regaining consciousness.
- You had a seizure in water.
- You think you may have hurt yourself.
- You are pregnant or have diabetes.

Don't do the following during or after a seizure:

- Restrain or hold down someone during a seizure.
- Place anything in the mouth.
- Give any medicine or drink until they are fully awake and alert.
- Start CPR unless the seizure has clearly stopped and there is no breath or pulse.

Things to avoid:

- Driving, unless you are cleared by your doctor.
- Working at heights or climbing a ladder.
- Using heavy machinery.
- Working around dangerous machines.
- Taking a bath unless your family can frequently check on you. It's safer to shower.
- Swimming without a life guard. Avoid swimming in open water.
- Working near open flames.

Safe care of an infant:

- Avoid bathing the child without another adult in the room.
- Feed the child at the lowest setting of the high chair or sitting on the ground.
- If carrying an infant up and down the stairs, strap the baby into a car seat.
- Keep infants and young children away from the stove when cooking.

What to expect in the Emergency Department (or ED)

Information that will help in your recovery.

What to expect in the Emergency Department:

- During your ED visit, you will be evaluated for some of the causes of your seizure.
- Not all of your testing will be done during the ED visit; this is only the first step in trying to find out why you had a seizure and your treatment plan.
- The testing and monitoring in the ED will help us determine whether you need to be admitted to the hospital or can follow up in an outpatient neurology practice.
- If you did have a seizure, the ED will be required to notify the Department of Motor Vehicles.*
- If you have financial or insurance related concerns, you can meet with someone from the case management or social work team. For follow up questions, please refer to Christiana Care's Health Guides at 302-320-6586 or healthguides@christianacare.org

What to Expect After the ED Visit:

- You will be contacted via phone by a staff member from the Christiana Care Neurology outpatient practice within four days.
 - Please call the practice at 302-623-3017 if you do not receive a phone call after 4 days.
- You will be given the option to schedule an appointment with a neurologist from the Christiana Care Neurology practice.
- If necessary, you will be scheduled for outpatient testing prior to seeing

the neurologist. The neurologist will usually order an electroencephalogram (EEG) and a brain MRI with IV contrast.

- If you have an existing neurologist, a staff member from Christiana Neurology outpatient practice will contact your doctor's office to inform them of your ED visit. Please call them to establish follow-up care as needed.

Driving Restrictions:

In the state of Delaware, every physician treating persons who are subject to losses of consciousness due to a disease of the central nervous system shall report to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) the names, ages and addresses of all such persons. A report has been submitted to the Division of Motor Vehicles today by your treating physician at the Emergency Department at Christiana Care Health System.

- * Most states require 3- to 18-months without seizures before a patient may resume driving a private vehicle. Please discuss with your outpatient doctor during the follow-up visit about when you can resume driving. Prior to that, it is illegal for you to drive.