

Seizure First Aid

Giving help to a person who is having a Seizure

Tonic-clonic seizures

A convulsive or tonic-clonic seizure starts when someone loses consciousness, stiffens unexpectedly, falls to the ground and starts jerking.

- Time the seizure.
- Protect from injury – remove any hard objects from the area.
- Protect the head – place something soft under their head and loosen any tight clothing.
- Gently roll the person on their side as soon as possible and lift their chin upwards to maintain an open airway to assist with breathing. A person cannot 'swallow their tongue' but the tongue can move back blocking the airway.
- Stay with the person until the seizure ends and calmly talk to the person until they regain consciousness, usually within a few minutes.
- Reassure the person that they are safe and that you will stay with them while they recover.

Do not restrain the person's movements.

Do not force anything in to the mouth.

Do not give the person water, pills or food until they are fully alert.

Focal seizures with altered awareness

With this type of seizure the person may appear unresponsive and confused. Automatic movements such as lip smacking, wandering, or fumbling hand movements may be present. A focal discognitive seizure can be mistaken for drug/alcohol-affected behaviour or mental health disturbance.

- During a focal discognitive seizure you may need to gently guide the person past obstacles and away from dangerous places.
- As the seizure finishes, establish supportive communication.
- Call an ambulance if the person doesn't start to recover after 5 minutes.

Absence seizures

An absence seizure causes loss of awareness and responsiveness for a brief period. The person stares vacantly, the eyes may drift upwards and flicker. It may be mistaken for daydreaming. Recognise that a seizure has occurred, reassure the person and repeat any information that may have been missed.

Call an ambulance – 000 – if:

- the seizure activity lasts 5 or more minutes or a second seizure quickly follows.
- the person remains non-responsive for more than 5 minutes after the seizure stops.
- the person is having a greater number of seizures than is usual for them or believe it to be, the person's first seizure
- the person is injured, pregnant or has swallowed water.