

Epilepsy: Safety During a Seizure

Safety During a Seizure

Let family and friends know what to expect and how to react when you have a seizure. This helps keep them calm and you safe. All seizures should be treated with care, but tonic-clonic seizures (seizures during which you lose consciousness) require more attention. Here are some pointers for loved ones.

What to Know

Seizures typically last less than 3 minutes. And people recover safely from most seizures. During a tonic-clonic seizure, the person may appear to stop breathing or turn slightly blue. This may be scary for you, but try to stay calm. Afterward, the person may be tired, confused, and achy. He or she may need to sleep for several hours to fully recover.



What to Do

During an seizure, stay with the person until it is over. Note the time when the seizure starts and ends. And don't try to stop the seizure. During a tonic-clonic seizure, also do the following:

- Move hard or sharp objects out of the way.
- Lay the person on a flat surface and turn them on their side.
- Place a flat, soft object under their head.
- Don't try to restrain the person. Both of you could get hurt.
- Don't put anything in the person's mouth. They cannot swallow their tongue, and you risk breaking their teeth or being bitten.
- Don't give the person medications during a seizure unless you've been trained by a doctor.
- Speak quietly to the person as they recover.

Call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, there is no conscious interval between 2 seizures, or several seizures occur in a row. These events could represent **status epilepticus**, a medical emergency. Also call 911 if the seizure is very different from past seizures, or if the person is pregnant.

© 2000-2012 Krames StayWell, 780 Township Line Road, Yardley, PA 19067 All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions.