Epilepsy & Seizures at School

Healthy Schools

October 2026

What We Will cover:

- What is a seizure?
- What is epilepsy?
- Common causes
- How to recognize
- How to help
- When to call 911
- Responsibility
- Questions

What is a **Seizure?**

A brief, temporary disturbance in the electrical activity of the brain and may affect:

- Muscle control and movement
- Speech
- Vision and/or eye movement
- Awareness and/or behaviour

Seizures can be:

- Convulsive or non-convulsive
- Vary in frequency and severity

What is a **Seizure?**

- Seizures are often symptoms of another health problem such as:
  - diseases
  - fever
  - temporary medical, neurological or neurosurgical illness
- Often, after the person is treated and the illness has resolved, the seizures do not occur again.

Signs of a **Seizure**

Signs of a seizure vary from person to person, but the following signs can occur:

- Shaking, jerking or tic-like movements
- Auras
- Stare into space
- Unresponsive
- Unconscious
- Confusion
- Eye blinking or eye rolling

Types of **Seizures**

Focal (partial)
Occurs in part of the brain

- Simple Partial
- Complex Partial

Generalized
Occurs in the whole brain

- Tonic
- Atonic
- Tonic-Clonic
- Myoclonic
- Absence

Review Video: Epilepsy and Seizure Information for Schools (7 min) - YouTube

What is the difference between Seizures and Epilepsy?

Seizures

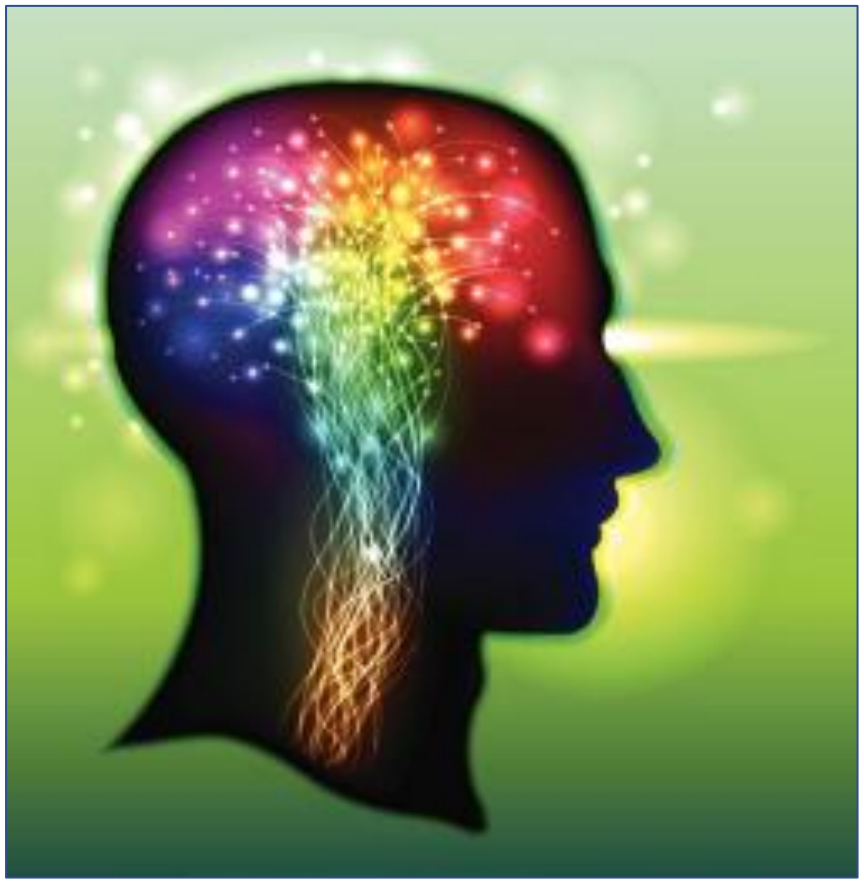
A seizure happens when there is a sudden surge of abnormal electrical activity in the brain, causing temporary changes in a person's movements, behavior, feelings, or awareness.

Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a chronic disorder of the brain in which repeated, unprovoked seizures occur because of sudden disruptions in normal brain electrical activity.

What is **Epilepsy**?

- Neurological disorder that makes people susceptible to seizures
- Sometimes called a seizure disorder
- Can develop at any age
- Seizures are chronic (ongoing and frequent)
- Seizures can often happen without known cause
- Many People with epilepsy experience more than one type of seizure.



Common **CAUSES** of Seizures

- Epilepsy (most common)
- Head injuries
- High fever (in young children)
- Low blood sugar or dehydration
- Infections
- Intracerebral injuries
- Birth Injury
- Alcohol Withdrawal

Common **Triggers** for Seizures

- Stress
- Poor nutrition
- Missed medication
- Flickering lights
- Skipping meals
- Illness, fever and allergies
- Lack of sleep
- Emotions such as anger, worry, fear and others
- Heat and/or humidity

Treatment

- Medication
  - Most common treatment
  - Seizures can be completely controlled in about 70% of all cases
  - Is a control, not a cure
- Surgery may be effective for some children
- Special diet may be used in some cases

How to **RESPOND**

- **Stay Calm**
- **Time** the seizure
- **Protect from harm**
- **Notify** parent/guardian

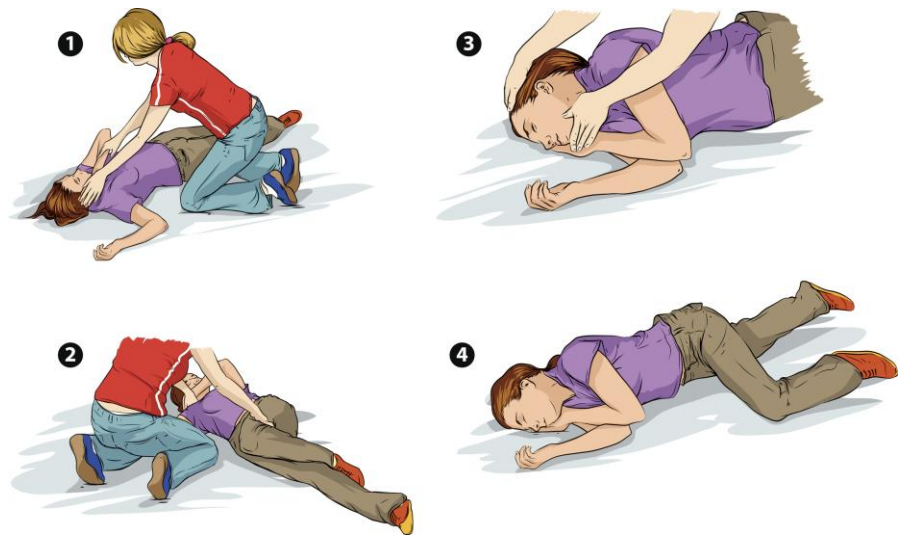
First Aid

1. Stay calm

2. Time the seizure
-Note the time that the seizure starts and ends
-Most seizures last less than 5 minutes

3. Protect from harm:
-Move hazardous objects out of the way
-**Do not** put anything in students' mouth

First_Aid_Poster.pdf



First Aid

4. Put the child into the recovery position:

-Place something soft under their head.

-Roll child on their side once the seizure has ended and it is safe to do so.

-Loosen tight clothing, remove objects such as glasses.

5. Document on the Seizure Record Form

-Describe the seizure

-How long did the seizure last?

-How did the person act immediately before and after the seizure?

Recovery

1. Reassure and Provide Comfort

-Talk gently to comfort and reassure the student.

-Stay with them until they are re-oriented.

2. Post Seizure Period

-Check for Injuries

-Call parents as per instructions on the care plan

-Allow student to rest or sleep and change clothes as needed.

-Student may complain of a headache or be confused

-No food or drink until the student is fully awake and alert

-Have someone remain with the student until they are fully recovered

When to call 9-1-1

- Follow the seizure action plan and medical alert information care and protocol form for students who are diagnosed with seizures.
- If the student does not recover and return to their usual self post seizure
- If there are breathing difficulties or appears grey or blue post seizure
- If the seizure has occurred in water
- If the person is injured, pregnant or has diabetes
- As soon as the rescue medication is given if this is the first time rescue medication is given
- This is the student's first seizure
- If you find someone convulsing and are unsure of how long the seizure has lasted

After the SEIZURE

Reassure and provide comfort

Check for injuries

Call parents if necessary/as per care plan

Allow student to change clothing if necessary

Allow student to rest or sleep

No food or drink until the student is fully awake and alert

Student may complain of headache or be confused

Have someone remain with the student until fully recovered

Family Responsibility

- Provide information about their child and complete the seizure action plan and medical alert information care and protocol form in consultation with their doctor or nurse practitioner yearly.
- Supply labelled medications or supplies and ensure they are not expired.
- Ensure student wears a Medic Alert identification
- Communicate with the school regarding medical changes
- Any student that receives a Seizure Rescue Medication at school must be picked up by a parent or guardian within 30 minutes or an ambulance will be called as per the seizure action plan

School Responsibility

1. **Ensure that school staff are aware of**:
   - Which students have seizures
   - Students' seizure action plan and seizure first aid
   - School District policy regarding medical conditions at school

2. **Ensure** seizure action plan and medical alert information care and protocol form is completed

3. Identify two-three staff members to provide seizure rescue interventions and complete training as identified in the seizure action plan and medical alert information care and protocol

4. **Safely store** the student's labelled medications & check they are not expired

5. **Document** seizures in a seizure record

6. **Communicate** with the family

Classroom Considerations for Students with Epilepsy

Accommodations to consider:

- Quiet work areas & regular breaks
- Clear and visual instructions
- Schedule important activities after breaks
- Present one idea at a time
- Provide notes in advance or recorded lessons
- School work time extensions

Resource:Supporting Students With Epilepsy Section 3 (epilepsyontario.org)

Resources

- Epilepsy and Seizure Information for Schools (7 min)
- First_Aid_Poster.pdf
- Seizures | HealthLink BC
- BC Epilepsy Society – Supporting those with Epilepsy in British Columbia
- Medical Conditions at School | Interior Health
- Nursing Support Services Clinical Resources | BC Children's Hospital
- School Resources - Nursing Support Services | BC Children's Hospital

Questions?