

What do I do until my appointment?

- Medications may be given to decrease your risk of another seizure. These medications are generally safe but can have side effects or reactions with other drugs. It is important to talk to your doctor or pharmacists about medication side effects or reactions with other drugs.
- If possible, bring someone who saw your seizure with you to your appointment. If this is not possible, get a detailed description from them about what happened before, during, and after the seizure.

Safety Precautions

- There is an increased risk of injury in people who have seizures.
- Avoid swimming, heights, bathing in tubs, open flames, heavy machinery, or dangerous sports.
- You cannot drive until your doctor says that it is safe.

Lifestyle

- Maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet and exercise routine.
- Avoid seizure triggers – alcohol, sleep deprivation, drugs and flashing lights.
- Keep a written record of your seizures with triggers and descriptions.

- Take your medications as directed. A sudden withdrawal of or decrease in the medication could cause a prolonged and severe seizure.
- Tell others what to do if you have a seizure.

What to do when someone has a seizure

- Stay calm and stay with the person.
- Do not restrain the person and do not put anything in their mouth.
- Move dangerous objects away from the person.
- Talk gently to comfort and reassure the person.

CALL 911 if the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes, if the person does not wake up, if confusion persists after the seizure or if a seizure repeats without full recovery in between.



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First Seizure

Information Guide for Patients and Families

What is a Seizure?

- Seizures are waves of abnormal electrical activity in the brain.
- 8 to 10% of people will have a seizure at one point in their life.
- There are many types of seizures
 1. Strange sensations (aura)
 2. Blank staring
 3. Repetitive mouth or hand movements
 4. A change in awareness (confused or drowsy)
 5. Convulsions/jerking
- The type of seizure depends on where in the brain this abnormal electrical activity is taking place.
- After the seizure you may not remember what happened and you may feel confused, tired, or have a headache that can last from minutes to days in some cases.
- Seizures can be a sign of epilepsy; however there are other causes such as low sugar, high fever, or ingestion of toxic substances.
- Some medical conditions can look like seizures (for example, fainting, stroke, panic attacks, and migraine).

Do I have Epilepsy?

- Epilepsy is a condition that causes people to have repeated seizures. It is a clinical diagnosis. Not everyone who has a seizure has epilepsy.
- Epilepsy can start at any age.
- Epilepsy is usually diagnosed after a person's 2nd seizure, although this depends on your personal history and test results.
- About 1 in 100 people will develop epilepsy in their lifetime.
- Your doctor will ask you important questions about your medical history. This will help determine if you had a seizure, if you have epilepsy and why.

Why has this happened to me now?

- Medications – the presence or withdrawal of some medications can cause seizures.
- Medical history – certain things can put people at risk of having a seizure. This can include:
 - Birth injury, head injury, stroke, brain infection, alcohol or drug abuse, brain tumour, abnormalities in bloodwork
- Having a family member with seizures may mean you have an increased risk of developing seizures.

Do I need any more tests?

After taking a history and performing a physical exam, your doctor will decide if you need more tests. Tests might include:

EEG (electroencephalogram)

- Measures electrical activity in the brain painlessly from electrodes placed on your head.

Brain Scan (CT or MRI)

- May be ordered to find a structural brain abnormality as a cause of your seizure.

Bloodwork

- To look for any infection, electrolyte abnormality, or abnormal blood sugar.

ECG

- Records the electronic activity of the heart to make sure it was not the cause of your spell.

Follow-Up

- You may be sent to your family physician or referred to a neurologist