

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Seizures

Normally, nerves in the brain communicate with one another by sending tiny electrical impulses. If these impulses get out of control and there is a sudden change in how the brain cells send signals to each other, a seizure can occur.

Seizures are also known as convulsions, fits or epilepsy. Most seizures last less than five minutes. During a seizure a child may pass out, fall, and the eyes stare, twitch, or roll up. The body becomes stiff and the arms and legs jerk or twitch. Or the child may just stare, look dazed, blink, or fall down. An infant may repeat some movements that just don't seem right. The child may wet his or her pants during the seizure. After the seizure, the child may be clumsy, weak or want to sleep.

Seizures happen for many reasons:

- born with a tendency to get seizures
- a blow or bump to the head strong enough to knock the child out
- an infection in the brain or spine
- a stroke caused by a blood clot or bleeding inside the brain
- a tumor or other growth that can press on the brain
- body chemistry out of balance, due to illness, poison or diet
- don't know the cause of about 50% to 75% of the time



Most seizures last less than five minutes.

A child with epilepsy has many seizures, which are not caused by body chemistry being out of balance. A child who has one or two seizures may not have epilepsy, but a child with epilepsy has seizures.

Anticonvulsants are medicines that control seizures. There are many kinds of these medicines. You must work closely with your doctor to control the child's seizures. As the child grows, the dose or type of medicine may change. Many children outgrow their seizures, and no longer have to take medicine. Others may have to take medicine the rest of their lives.



**As the child grows,
the dose or type
of medicine may change.**

Some triggers may cause a person with epilepsy to have seizures, even if he or she takes medicine regularly.

These triggers are:

- certain situations, such as flashing lights or special sounds
- fever
- injuries
- being very tired from hard work or play
- not getting enough sleep
- a long time of not eating enough healthy food
- stress or pressures in the family, at school or at work

Each person responds to different triggers.

If your child has a seizure:

- Keep calm.
- Protect the child from getting hurt:
 - move away furniture and things the child could get hurt on
 - place the child on something soft, or the floor
- Do not hold the child to try to stop or lessen the seizure.
- If possible, turn the child on his or her side. This will keep the child from choking.
- Do not put anything in the child's mouth.
- Stay near the child until he or she is awake.
- Do not offer food or drink until the child is fully awake.



**Place the child
on something soft,
or the floor.**

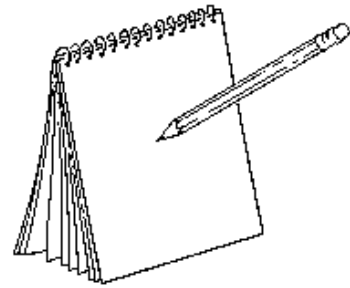


If the seizure lasts for more than five minutes,
or the child has trouble breathing, call 911.

Remember the details.

If possible, write these things:

- Date of seizure
- When it began, how long it lasted
- Why you think it happened?
What was the trigger?
- Where did it start? What parts of the body moved?
How did they move?
- Was the child awake during the seizure?
- Did the child sweat during or after the seizure?
- Did the child wet or soil his or her pants during or
after the seizure?
- How long did it take for the child to wake up back to normal after the seizure?



Write down the details.

Children and adults with epilepsy can live normal, happy lives.



If you have any questions or concerns, call:

- your child's doctor
- The Pediatric Neurology Office at Phoenix Children's Hospital
602-933-0970
- The Epilepsy Society of Arizona: 602-285-3581

Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what a seizure looks like. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor what you would do if your child has a seizure. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
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Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

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This handout is also available in Spanish as #164/37s