

SEIZURE CARE

Activity in the brain is controlled by electrical impulses. If these electrical signals are not sent in the right order or at the proper rate, seizures can occur. Some things that can cause seizures are a high fever, a head injury, or poisoning.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A SEIZURE

Seizures can cause sudden, uncontrolled movements. The movements may involve the whole body or only certain parts, such as the face, arms, or legs. The eyes may move rapidly from side to side, roll to one side, or roll back in the head. It may be hard to see the colored part of the eye. During a seizure, your child may have irregular breathing. His or her lips may turn blue. Your child might urinate or have a bowel movement during the seizure. When the seizure is over, your child may want to go to sleep.

WHAT TO DO DURING A SEIZURE

It is very important to protect your child from injury while he is having a seizure. Here are some tips to help you:

1. **Stay with your child until the seizure stops.** Even though you may feel frightened, **try to stay calm.**
2. Use a clock or watch to time the seizure. (It may be hard to remember to do this at the time, but because we all have a different sense of time, it is the only sure way to know exactly how long the seizure lasted.)
3. If your child is sitting or standing, gently **ease him to the floor.**
4. If possible, **place your child on his side.** Turn his head to the side with his face downward so that secretions can drain out of the mouth to prevent choking. Place something soft under his head.
5. Loosen tight clothing.
6. If your child wears glasses, remove them.
7. **Move the tables, chairs, or other hard objects away** so that he cannot hurt himself. (If objects cannot be moved, gently slide your child away from them.)

WHAT NOT TO DO

- **Do not** try to open your child's mouth or place anything between the teeth. This could injure his gums or break his teeth.
- **Do not** try to stop or restrain your child's movements.
- **Do not** put your fingers into the child's mouth. He might accidentally bite them.



Picture 1 Turn your child's head to the side and point the face downward.

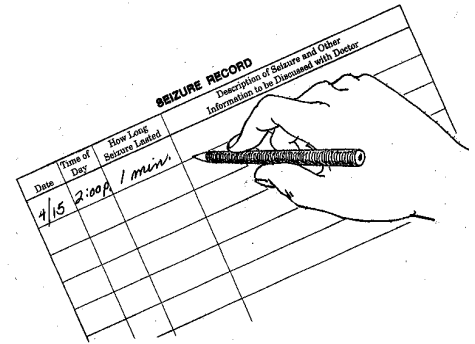
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

There are many different kinds of seizures. The doctor must know which kind your child has before the right medicine can be prescribed. It may be hard to tell certain kinds of seizures from others. The doctor may not see the seizure, so he or she must rely on your description and results of medical tests to decide which medicine to use. The better you can describe the seizure, the easier (and perhaps sooner) the doctor can start bringing the seizures under control.

It is possible for a child to have more than one type of seizure. If you recognize more than one kind, be sure to describe each one separately on the Seizure Record (page 4).

These questions will help you know what to watch for:

- What was the child doing when the seizure started?
- What was the exact time of day?
- What happened just before the seizure?
- Had your child just awakened in the morning, or just started or finished a nap?
- What called your attention to it? Did your child cry out, fall, stare, or turn his head?
- How did the seizure develop (suddenly, gradually, one part of the body)?
- Did your child's body become stiff?
- Were there jerks, twitches, or convulsions?
- What part of the body moved first? Next?
- Did your child's eyelids flutter or the eyes roll?
- Did your child's skin show changes (flushed, clammy, blue)?
- Did your child's breathing change?
- Did your child talk or do anything during the seizure?
- Could you make contact with the child during the seizure? Did he or she respond?
- Did your child urinate, have a bowel movement, or vomit during the seizure?
- What was the child's behavior like after the seizure (alert, drowsy, confused)? Did he remember what happened?
- Did the child remember any unusual feelings or sensations **before** the seizure?
- If the child is taking medicine, when was the last dose?
- How long did the seizure last?
- Are there any other things connected with the seizure you think the doctor should know?



Picture 2 Keep a record of what happens before, during, and after a seizure.

AFTER THE SEIZURE

Let your child rest after he is cleaned up (he may have soiled his pants or vomited). He may be very tired and sleep for several hours. He may complain of a mild headache. Check on your child every 5 minutes. **If your child cannot be awakened 30 minutes after the seizure, get emergency help.**

KEEPING A SEIZURE RECORD

The Seizure Record on page 4 will help you keep an accurate record of the details of your child's seizures when they occur. This record will be especially helpful during the first several visits to the doctor when a treatment plan is being developed. Later on, keeping a detailed record may not be advised because it may call more attention to your child's condition than necessary. Ask your child's doctor when you should stop keeping the record.

MEDICINES

- **If prescriptions are to be refilled, it is very important to do this at least 2 days before the last dose of medicine is given.**
- Always give the medicine as scheduled.
- **Do not give extra medicine or change the medicine dosage** without checking with your child's doctor. If your child misses a dose of medicine, give it as soon as you remember, but never give two doses at the same time.
- **Even if your child is not having seizures, he should continue to take the medicine until the doctor says he no longer needs it.**
- It's important to learn the names and dosages of your child's medicine(s).
- Shake liquid medicines before giving the dose.
- If your child gags and spits out the medicine before swallowing it, give the same dose once more. If the child swallows the dose and then vomits, do not repeat the dose. Call the child's doctor.

WHEN TO CALL FOR HELP

Have someone call for emergency help if any of these things happen:

- If your child has trouble breathing during the seizure and he has a change in color.
- If the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes.
- If the child chokes on secretions (blood, vomit, etc.)
- If the child is injured during a fall or during the seizure that requires first aid (cut, broken bone)
- Check on your child every 5 minutes. If you can't wake up your child 30 minutes after the seizure, get emergency help.

ACTIVITY

Your child should avoid activities like bike-riding, swimming, climbing, and bathing unsupervised. These things could cause injury if he has another seizure.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- Complete the list of phone numbers below.
- Make a card to carry in your wallet.
- Your child should wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace that states that he has seizures.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you (in the original containers) whenever your child sees a new doctor or goes to an emergency room. This helps doctors who may not know your child.
- Tell your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, baby-sitter, and others that your child is taking medicine for seizures. Ask for extra copies of this Helping Hand so they will know the side effects to watch for, and what to do if your child has a seizure.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Your phone numbers: daytime: _____ evening: _____

Your address: _____ Nearest Intersection: _____

Neurology Department (614) 722-4625 After office hours and on weekends and holidays you can speak with a neurology resident by calling the hospital operator at 722-2000.)

Doctors and nurses:

Name

Phone

