



Epilepsy Awareness

Epilepsy is a tendency to recurrent seizures originating in the brain. It can be an inherited condition but can also be the result of physical damage to the brain as a result of a head injury, an infection, substance abuse, tumour or stroke. An epileptic seizure is an intermittent disturbance of consciousness, behaviour, emotion, motor function, perception or sensation. Seizures can be partial: affecting part of the brain, or generalised: affecting the entire brain and resulting in a loss of consciousness

Partial Seizures can be simple or complex:

A simple partial seizure does not cause a loss of consciousness

A complex partial seizure can cause a change to consciousness and perception.

Generalised Seizures typically occur in 5 sub types:

Absence: Staring and blinking

Myoclonic: Brief jerking movements, usually of upper body.

Tonic-clonic: Going stiff and falling – followed by convulsions (jerking movements)

Tonic: Going stiff and falling without convulsions

Atonic: Falling limply to the ground

Impact on learning

Following a seizure a student with epilepsy may need to rest for anything from a couple of hours to a day or more. In extreme cases a person may need to remain in hospital while tests are carried out. If a person with epilepsy is taking medication this can slow down their processing speed and reduce the volume of academic work they can get through in a given period of time compared to peers.

Relevant Supports & Accommodations

During a Needs Assessment it is vital to attain the following information so that a complete understanding of the person's epilepsy can be used to identify reasonable accommodations:

- Epilepsy Type
- Seizure Type/Types
- Frequency/pattern
- What exactly happens
- Specific support needs during and after a seizure

In general, students with epilepsy will benefit from some or all of the following supports and accommodations

- Additional Tuition
- Exam Accommodations
- Extended Library Loans
- Extensions to assessment deadlines
- Lens Report
- Photocopy Cards

Further resources and information:

Epilepsy Ireland
249 Crumlin Road,
Dublin 12.
Ph: 01-4557500
Web: www.epilepsy.ie
Email: info@epilepsy.ie

Guidelines for responding to Epilepsy Seizure**During a Seizure Do Not:**

- put anything in the mouth
- restrain or restrict movement during the seizure
- give anything to eat or drink
- move the person unless they are in danger

During a Seizure:

- note the time
- clear a space around the person
- cushion the head to prevent head and facial injury
- remove spectacles, if worn
- loosen tight neckwear
- loosen chest and leg safety straps on wheelchairs
- turn on side if possible, to aid drainage
- reassure others and explain what you are doing

At the end of a Seizure:

- reassure the person and tell them what has happened
- check for signs of injury and apply first aid if necessary
- observe the person and stay with them until recovery is complete (they may need assistance to return to their routine)
- provide privacy and offer assistance if there has been incontinence
- record appropriately

Call an Ambulance:

- if it is the person's first seizure
- if a seizure lasts more than 5 minutes and you do not know the usual length of the person's seizure
- if a seizure lasts 2 minutes more than is usual, and rescue medication isn't prescribed
- if a tonic clonic seizure follows another without full recovery in between, and rescue medication has not been prescribed or been effective
- if concussion/head injury is suspected
- if you are concerned about the person's colour/breathing
- if water is inhaled
- when directed by organisational policy