**Seizures** (LO 3.5)

A seizure is a sudden, uncontrolled electrical disturbance in the brain. Seizures can cause changes in behaviour, movements, feelings and levels of consciousness. There are over 40 different types of seizure and they can vary in appearance – for example one person may go ‘blank’ for a couple of seconds, another may wander round or be confused or they may fall to the ground unconscious and convulse.

Head injuries, poisoning and stroke can also cause seizures and be suspicious of cardiac arrest if a person appears to be experiencing a seizure like episode.

When we think about seizures we are probably most familiar with **EPILEPSY**

Epilepsy is a neurological condition which means it affects the brain and the nervous system. It is also a physical condition because the body is affected when someone has a seizure.

Epilepsy is described as the tendency to have repeated seizures that start in the brain.

Over 500,000 people have epilepsy in the UK

**Tonic Clonic Seizures (previously called Grand Mal)**

These are the seizures most people think of as Epilepsy

**At the start of the seizure**

* The person becomes unconscious
* Their body goes stiff and if they are standing they usually fall backwards
* They may cry out
* They may bite their tongue or cheek

**During the seizure**

* They jerk and shake (convulse) as their muscles relax and tighten rhythmically
* Their breathing might be affected and become difficult or sound noisy
* Their skin may change colour and become very pale or bluish
* They may drool and their eyes may roll back
* They may wet themselves

**After the seizure (once the jerking stops)**

* Their breathing and colour return to normal
* They may feel tired, confused, have a headache or want to sleep

**How to manage a person who is having a tonic/clonic seizure**

**Aim:**

* Protect from injury during the seizure
* Care for the casualty after the seizure has ended

**What to do:**

* TIME! (at onset of seizure)
* Make space
* Protect head
* Loosen any tight clothing around the neck
* TIME! (when seizure ends)
* ABCs / SAP & damage check – **999?**
* Monitor and record vital signs
* Recovery

**After the seizure has ended**

Check ABCs and roll casualty into SAP

Check for any injuries

Monitor and record vital signs

RECOVERY Reassure and re-orientate the casualty

Consider the casualty’s dignity, particularly if they have wet themselves which is common. Shield the casualty or move people away.

**When to call 999:**

* Seizure last > 5 mins (risk of status epilepticus)
* Stops breathing
* Incurs head injury
* Repeated seizures
* First seizure
* Remains unresponsive for more than 10 minutes

A seizure that lasts longer than 5 minutes, or having more than 1 seizure within a 5 minutes period, without returning to a normal level of consciousness between episodes is called **status epilepticus**. This is a medical emergency that may lead to permanent brain damage or death.

**For more information:** [**https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk**](https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk)



**Swift First Aid**

June 2020