

First Aid for Seizures

In all types of seizures, the goal is to protect the person from harm until full awareness returns.

- 1 **Keep Calm.** Seizures may appear frightening to the onlooker. They usually last only a few minutes and generally do not require medical attention. Remember that the person having a seizure may be unaware of their actions and may or may not hear you.
- 2 **Protect from further injury.** If necessary, ease the person to the floor. Move any hard, sharp or hot objects well away. Protect the person's head and body from injury. Loosen any tight neckwear.
- 3 **Do not restrain the person.** If danger threatens, gently guide the person away. Agitation during seizure episodes is common. Trying to restrain or grabbing hold of someone having a seizure is likely to make the agitation worse and may trigger an instinctive aggressive response.
- 4 **Do not insert anything in the mouth.** The person is not going to swallow the tongue. Attempting to force open the mouth may break the teeth or cause other oral injuries.
- 5 **Roll the person on their side after the seizure subsides.** This enables saliva to flow from the mouth, helping to ensure an open air passage. If there is vomit, keep the person on their side and clear out their mouth with your finger.
- 6 **If a seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, or repeats without full recovery — SEEK MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY.**
This may be a condition called *status epilepticus*. Although it rarely occurs, it is a serious medical emergency.
- 7 **Talk gently to the person.** After any type of seizure, comfort and reassure the person to assist them in reorienting themselves. The person may need to rest or sleep. If the person wanders, stay with them and talk gently to them.

Check for a MedicAlert™ or other Medical ID Bracelet. The bracelet or necklet may indicate the seizure type and any medication the person is taking. If you call the MedicAlert hotline, an operator can direct you in your first aid procedures and may direct you to call any emergency contacts and physicians listed in that member's file.

First Aid for Persons in a Wheelchair having a Tonic-Clonic Seizure

During the Seizure

- ∩ Keep calm and let the seizure run its course.
- ∩ Hold the wheelchair and ensure the brakes are on to protect him or her from injury.
- ∩ Do not put anything in the person's mouth.
- ∩ Remove from the area anything that may cause injury or could be a hazard to someone who is temporarily unaware of their location or actions.

After the Seizure

- ∩ Set the wheelchair to a "partial recline" position (not "full recline").
- ∩ Gently turn the person's head to the side to let the saliva flow out of the mouth.
- ∩ Let the person rest or sleep if it is needed.
- ∩ Be reassuring, comforting and calm as awareness returns.

