

How Do I Care for My Child with Seizures?

Caring for your child with seizures can be very scary and overwhelming. When a seizure happens, it's important to try to stay calm so you can help your child. Remember, a seizure isn't always an emergency and will usually stop on its own with no treatment. Keeping your child safe during the seizure is your top priority.

About seizures:

There are different types of seizures. It's important to know which type your child has because each type is treated differently. (See handout "What are Seizures?") Follow the care directions for the type of seizure your child is having.

Care during a generalized tonic-clonic seizure:

1. Help your child lie down in a place where they can't hurt themselves. You only need to move your child during a seizure if they are in a dangerous place like a street or near water.
2. Gently roll your child to one side. This will help drain saliva from their mouth and prevent choking if they throw up after the seizure.
3. Loosen your child's collar or anything tight around the neck and put something soft and flat under their head.
4. Remove any objects that may harm your child, including eyeglasses.
5. Don't put anything between your child's teeth or in their mouth—this can cause harm. Your child can't swallow their tongue.
6. Don't try to hold your child or stop their movements –this won't stop the seizure.
7. Don't worry if your child stops breathing or turns blue/pale for a few seconds during the seizure. Breathing should start as soon as the seizure is over. If your child doesn't start breathing again, call 911 and start CPR.
8. Time the seizure, write down which parts of the body were moving, and any unusual behavior or movements that happened just before the seizure. After your child rests, ask what they remember about the seizure. (See handout "Understanding Your Child's Seizure").
9. Stay with your child until the seizure is over.
10. Let your child rest.
11. Call the neurology clinic to let their doctor know about the seizure.
12. If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, give your child the emergency medicines prescribed by their Neurologist. If your child doesn't have emergency medicines or the emergency medicine doesn't work after a few minutes, call 911.

Care during an absence seizure:

1. Make sure your child is in a safe place
2. Write down how often the seizures happen and how long they last
3. Talk to your child during the seizure. When the seizure is over, ask your child to repeat what you said to them during the seizure. They may not remember. This information can help the Neurologist understand your child's seizures.

Care during a focal onset seizure:

1. Understand that your child may not hear you or understand what they're doing.
2. Stay with your child until they are fully awake.
3. Move your child to a safe place. Move any objects that may harm them.
4. Write down how long the seizure lasts and what your child did. Ask your child what they remember when the seizure is over.
5. If you're not sure if a movement or event is a seizure, record a video and email it to your child's doctor.
6. If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, give your child emergency medicines prescribed by their Neurologist. If your child doesn't have emergency medicines or the emergency medicine doesn't work after a few minutes, call 911.

Care during a myoclonic or atonic seizure:

1. Keep track of how often the seizure happens.
2. Talk to your child during the seizure. They may be scared or startled, and your voice may help calm them.
3. If your child falls and hits their head or face frequently, ask their Neurologist about a protective helmet.

When is it an emergency?

Every child is different. Talk to your child's Neurologist to create a plan for their situation.

Below are some general guidelines to help you decide if the situation is an emergency:

- If your child has two seizures without returning to normal behavior between the seizures
- if your child has a seizure lasting longer than 5 minutes
- if your child has more than 6 seizures in 1 hour
 - Give emergency medicines as directed by their Neurologist.
 - Call 911 if your child doesn't have emergency medications or if the seizure/cluster isn't stopped by the emergency medicines.
 - Any time this happens contact their Neurologist after they're stable.
- If your child doesn't start breathing again when the seizure ends, call 911 and start CPR.

For more information, please see following handouts:

- "What Do I Need to Know About My Child's Seizures?"
- "What are Seizures?"