

Epilepsy & Seizures

(CLSM 8:18-19)

A seizure is the effect on the body when the brain's functions are disturbed. It is like an electrical storm in the brain, but the exact cause of seizures is unknown. Most seizures can, however, be controlled by medication. Anyone can have a seizure, and there are a variety of things that may trigger them including overheating, malnutrition, drugs, poison, allergic reactions, etc.

Epilepsy is the condition of having chronic seizures. Someone who has epilepsy may have a medic alert bracelet, anklet, or necklace. They also may have medication to control their seizures. Some things that may trigger a seizure for an epileptic include flashing lights, stress and water.

There are two main types of seizures:

Petit Mal ('Small bad')

This type of seizure is mild and usually is just a relatively short, blank stare. The person may appear to be daydreaming, but is unaware of it, and will not remember the short period of time.

Grand Mal ('Big bad')

Prior to a grand mal seizure, the person will usually sense it coming. This is called an *aura*, and can be just a feeling of urgency, or a metallic taste in the mouth. There are two stages of the seizure: the *Ictal phase*, and the *Postictal phase*. The Ictal phase may have some, or all of the following **characteristics**:

- Loss of LOC, with the victim usually falling
- _____ of muscles and rigid extension of the body
- Gurgling breathing with danger of respiratory arrest
- Loss of bladder control
- Usually under 2 minutes, but can be much longer

In the Postictal phase, the victim usually becomes conscious and may appear to be fine, but is still confused. This may last between 10 and 30 minutes. After becoming fully conscious, the victim will not remember either stage of the seizure.

Treatment:

- Maintain ABC's. Do NOT put anything in or near their mouth.
- Protect the head (and other parts of the body) from injury. Realize that there may be a lot of force in their convulsions, and keep your _____ as a priority.
- Call EMS immediately if ABC's are compromised, or any major injuries are sustained. Otherwise, call EMS if the seizure lasts 2 minutes.
- Once the seizure has stopped, get a full history, contact parents if needed, and fully assess the patient for any injuries.

Note that when a person's muscles contract, they become much more dense. That means that if a seizure occurs in the water, you may find that they _____