

Seizures

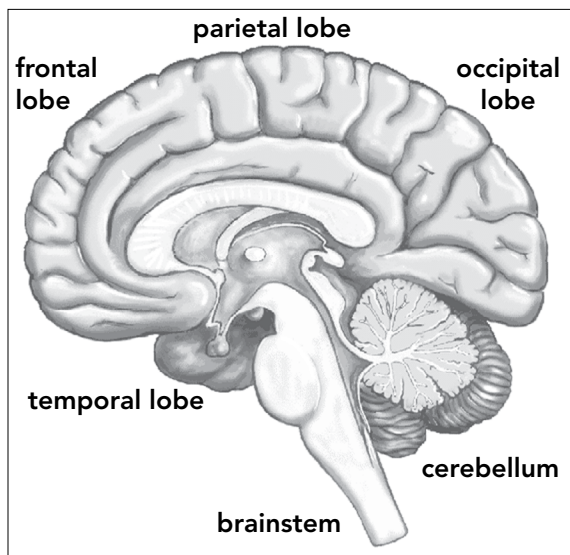
Seizure

A seizure is an electrical disturbance in the brain. During a seizure, your body may jerk and twitch. You may faint.

In most cases, seizures will last just a few minutes and stop on their own. They are not painful and do not cause brain damage.

Most seizures can be controlled by medicine. Until the seizures are under control, do not participate in activities that are very physical, involve jumping from high places, go swimming and taking a shower unattended.

Seizures can be located in the full brain, or in one area.



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A side view of the brain.

Types of Seizures

There are different types of seizures, depending on the part of the brain that is involved.

Simple

This type of seizure may involve jerking of one limb or side of the body. You remain conscious during this type of seizure.

This type of seizure lasts 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Complex

This type of seizure may cause you to appear confused, drugged or disturbed emotionally. You may smack your lips, do an activity without any purpose, or perform a repetitive motion.

This type of seizure lasts 1 or 2 minutes.

Tonic — Clonic

This type of seizure used to be known as a grand mal seizure. It affects your entire body. You may stiffen, jerk and even fall. You may faint, cry out, bite your tongue, or stop breathing.

This type of seizure lasts 1 to 3 minutes.

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Absence

This type of seizure does not affect your entire body. You may stare, either blinkingly or non-blinkingly, twitch or smack your lips. Your hands may jerk.

This is the most common type of seizure in children. This lasts just a few seconds and may be confused with a daydream.

This type of seizure lasts 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Warning Signs

You may have a strange feeling or sensation before a seizure. This sensation is called an aura. It may include:

- ringing or buzzing in the ear
- dizziness
- strong emotions
- bright lights.

If a particular sensation happens often before a seizure, this can be used as an early warning to find a safe place during the seizure.

What To Do During a Seizure

- Remain calm.
- Lay your loved one on their side with something soft under the head.
Do not restrain them or put anything in their mouth.
- Check a clock to time the seizure.
- Watch for arm, leg or eye movements.
- Check your loved one's breathing.

When To Call the Health Care Provider

Call your loved one's health care provider if your loved one refuses to take their medicine, is vomiting medicine, or seems very drowsy.

When To Call 911

Call 911 if your loved one:

- has seizure is longer than 5 minutes
- has a few seizures without regaining consciousness
- has a blue or purple tinge to their skin tone
- is not breathing for more than 30 to 60 seconds.

Follow-up Tests

Call your health care provider if you have seizures more often, or if they seem different than usual.

Your health care team may want you to have tests such as:

- an electroencephalogram (EEG) to measure the electrical activity in your brain.
- a CT (computed tomography) or MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) to create images of your brain
- blood or urine tests.