Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizure (Grand Mal Seizure)

Generalized Tonic Clonic Seizures are also called Grand Mal Seizures. The patient

- Suddenly falls
- Becomes stiff
- this is followed by:
  - muscle jerks
  - shallow breathing
  - bluish skin
  - They may urinate or have a bowel movement

The seizure usually lasts 1 to 5 minutes.

Normal breathing returns when the seizure is over.

The patient may be confused.

He often fall asleep.

He may have a headache.

• Stay calm. Stay with the patient. Do not go for help. Call out if you need to.

• Put the patient where he cannot hurt himself (for example if he is on a table, place him on the ground).

• Loosen the patient’s clothing. Remove eyeglasses, sharp objects and nearby furniture.

• Roll the patient on his right side. Tilt his head downward to allow saliva to drain away and to help him breathe.

• Place something soft under his head.

• Do NOT try to hold down the tongue. Do NOT stick anything in his mouth. You could cause him to choke or damage the mouth or tongue. *It is impossible to swallow your tongue.*

• Do NOT restrain the patient or hold him down.

• Do NOT give the patient anything by mouth including medication till the seizure is over and he is fully awake.

• Do NOT do mouth-to-mouth breathing unless the patient is not breathing after the seizure is over.

• When the patient stops seizing and regains consciousness, find a place for him to rest and become reoriented.

When you need to call 911 or go to the hospital

Seizures usually stop within five minutes and generally you do not need to go to the hospital.

**Look at a clock.** If the seizures lasts longer than 5 minutes or if the seizures are occurring one after the other, call 911. To time the seizure, only count time the patient is jerking, staring or wandering. The time does NOT include the drowsiness that can occur after the seizure. If you take the patient to the hospital, have someone go with you. Don’t cause a car accident by rushing to the hospital, but go as quickly as possible.

**If you have rectal Diastat** (it can be prescribed by your doctor), it should be given for seizure lasting more than 5 minutes, more frequent seizures during the day than they usually have or if one seizure ends and another follows soon after. *By giving Diastat, you may stop the seizure and avoid a trip to the ER.*

If there is a change in the frequency or seizure appearance, call our office at (901) 405-0275 during the day or call the answering service at (901) 541-5082 after hours.
**Partial Complex Seizure**  
*(Temporal Lobe or Psychomotor)*

Partial Complex Seizures are also called Temporal Lobe or Psychomotor Seizures. The patient may:
- have a blank stare.
- have a chewing motion of the mouth.
- act confused or dazed.
- pick at their clothes.
- wander off, run or appear scared.

The seizure usually lasts 1 to 5 minutes.

The patient may be confused or drowsy afterward.

The patient will have no memory of the seizure.

- Stay calm. Stay with the patient. Do not go for help. Call out if you need to.
- Guide the patient away from sharp objects, or stairs.
- **Do NOT** grab the patient unless he are getting into a dangerous situation such as a balcony or a hot stove.
- **Do NOT** shout.
- **Do NOT** restrain the patient or hold him down.
- **Do NOT** expect the patient to follow your commands.
- Stay with the patient until he is completely aware of his surroundings. When the patient stops seizing and regains consciousness, help him to become reoriented.

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**Absence Seizure**  
*(Petit Mal Seizure)*

Absence Seizures are also called Petit Mal Seizures. The patient will:
- have an abrupt blank stare.
- may have a blinking or have chewing motion of the mouth.

The seizure usually lasts 10-20 seconds.

When the seizure is over, the patient will be fully awake.

- Usually no first aid is needed.
- Call your doctor if there is is a significant change in the patient’s seizure frequency, severity or appearance.

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**Atonic and Myoclonic Seizures**  
*(Drop attacks)*

**Atonic Seizures:** The patient will collapse, losing muscle tone.

**Myoclonic Seizures:** the patient will
- jerk part or all of their body.
- may drop a glass or fall out of his chair.

The seizure usually lasts 1-3 seconds.

He is fully awake during the seizure.

- Usually no first aid is needed.
- Call your doctor if there is is a significant change in the patient’s seizure frequency, severity or appearance.

Written by Don Eastmead, M.D. & edited by Drew Eastmead June 2004