

recording seizures

This factsheet gives some ideas of what can be useful to find out about someone's epilepsy and what can be helpful to look out for and make a note of before, during and after a seizure.

describing and recording seizures

Everyone is individual and people react in different ways to their seizures and in how they recover. Often people cannot remember what happened to them during a seizure. Some people like to be talked to during their seizures and as they come around. Some need to sleep afterwards. It may be helpful to find out as many details as you can about their epilepsy.

The list of questions below may help the person with epilepsy and their doctors to work out what happened during the seizure and why the seizure may have happened.

questions to consider

- What type or types of seizure does the person usually have?
- How long do their seizures normally last?
- When do the seizures usually happen, (for example, in the morning or evening)?
- Do they have any triggers, such as being tired or having photosensitive epilepsy (seizures triggered by flashing lights or moving patterns)?
- Do they have any warning before a seizure happens?
- How do they feel afterwards?
- Do they need to sleep afterwards?
- How long does it take them to recover fully?
- How often do their seizures happen?
- Do they have a history of status epilepticus (repeated or long seizures that do not stop on their own and need emergency medication to stop them)?
- Do they take any medication (this information may be helpful if they are taken to hospital)?
- Is there anything else that may be helpful to know about their seizures?
- Is there anything in particular they would like you to do to help them during or after a seizure?



recording a seizure – specific things to think about

before the seizure

Were there any triggers for the seizure, such as:

- were they feeling tired?
- were they feeling stressed?
- were they ill?

Did they have any warning before the seizure, such as:

- a change of mood?
- restlessness?
- making any sound, such as crying out or mumbling?

Did they experience any sensations, such as:

- a strange taste in the mouth or smelling a strange odour?
- seeing spots in front of their eyes?
- a strange or rising feeling in the stomach?
- a weakness, numbness, tingling or 'pins and needles' in the arms, legs or face?

Where were they and what were they doing when the seizure happened? Were they:

- standing, sitting or lying down?
- walking, or sleeping?

during the seizure

Did they fall down, and if so:

- did they fall forwards or backwards?
- did they go stiff and fall, or slump and fall?

Did they lose consciousness and if so, for how long?

Did their colour change, such as:

- go pale or grey?
- go red?
- go blue around the mouth or face?

Did any parts of their body move, and if so:

- which parts, for example their arms, legs or head?
- did they make facial movements such as chewing or lip smacking?
- did their head or eyes turn to one side and if so, which side?

after the seizure

Did they injure themselves and if so, what were the injuries and how were they treated?

After the seizure did they:

- recover quickly and carry on with activities?
- become confused, and if so, for how long?
- become agitated, aggressive or restless?
- need to sleep, and if so, for how long?

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