

Supporting Students with Seizures in School

TIER 1 TRAINING

BASED ON THE SEIZURE TRAINING FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

FROM THE EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

Seizures in School

Ever seen a
person having a
seizure?

Do you know
what to do?

Objectives

Recognize

3 Types of Seizures

Know

How to Activate the
MERT Team

Describe

The 3 Seizure First Aid
Steps

Describe

3 Ways to Support
Students with Seizures

Handouts

UNDERSTANDING SEIZURES & EPILEPSY

Seizure & Epilepsy Overview

What is epilepsy?



Seizure First Aid

What to do in the event of a seizure

1

STAY with the person and start timing the seizure. Remain *calm* and check for medical ID.



2

Keep the person **SAFE**. Move or guide away from *harmful objects*.



3

Turn the person onto their **SIDE** if they are not awake and aware. *Don't block airway*, put something small and soft under the head, loosen tight clothes around neck.

4

Do **NOT** put *anything* in their mouth. Don't give water, pills or food until the person is awake.



5

Do **NOT** *restrain*.



6

STAY with them until they are awake and alert after the seizure. *Most seizures end in a few minutes.*



Call 911:

- ▲ Seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
- ▲ Repeated seizures
- ▲ Difficulty breathing
- ▲ Seizure occurs in water
- ▲ Person is injured, pregnant, or sick
- ▲ Person does not return to their usual state
- ▲ First time seizure

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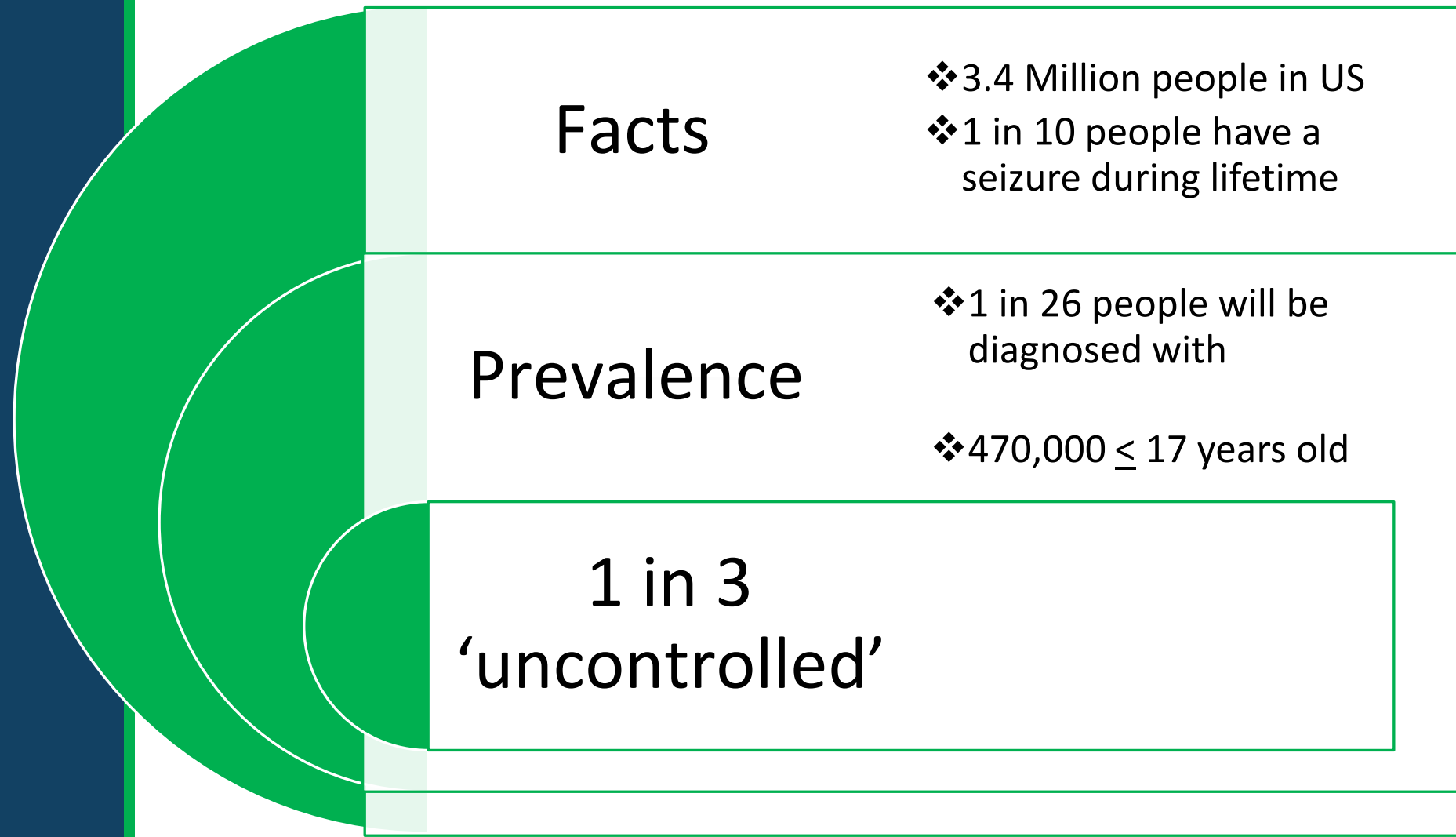
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Epilepsy

'Seizure Disorder'



Seizures

Common causes include:

- Brain trauma
- Brain lesions
- Infections of the brain
- Brain injury at birth
- Abnormal brain development
- Stroke
- Genetic Factors

Did you know?

Most **NOT**
emergencies

May **NOT** be
aware

NOT
contagious

IS a medical condition

Can **NOT**
swallow
tongue

EVERYONE can learn
Seizure First Aid

What Causes a Seizure?

- ❖ Electrical signals changed/disrupted
 - ❖ 'Short circuit' between brain cells

- ❖ Conditions that Can Cause Seizures:
 - ❖ Epilepsy
 - ❖ Low Blood Sugar
 - ❖ Head Injuries
 - ❖ Fever



What Do Seizures Look Like?

❖ Depend on area of the brain involved

❖ Sensation

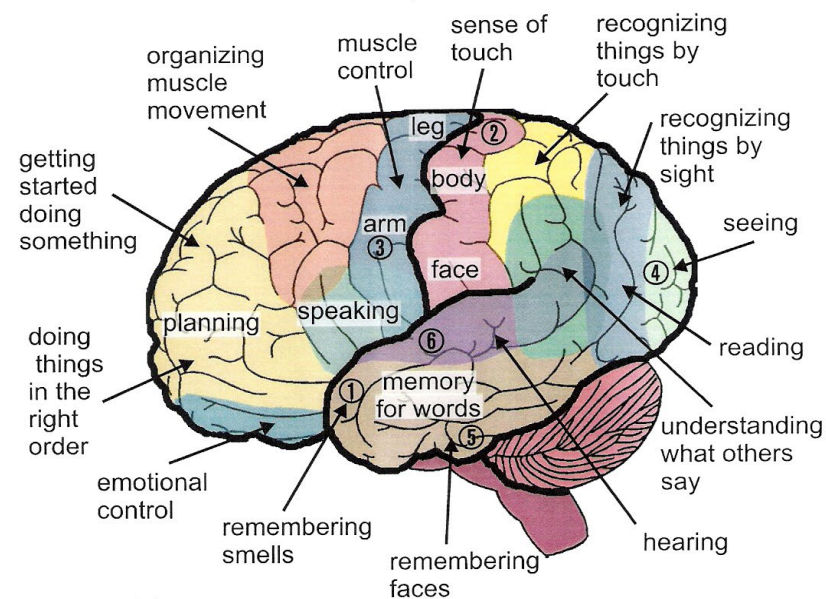
❖ Behavior

❖ Cognitive or physical functions

❖ Movements

❖ Awareness

Left Side of the Brain



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How are Seizures Classified?

- ❖ **WHERE** they start in Brain
- ❖ Whether **AWARENESS** is affected
- ❖ Involvement of **OTHER SYMPTOMS**



3 Types of Seizures

- ❖ **Focal**

- ❖ Aware

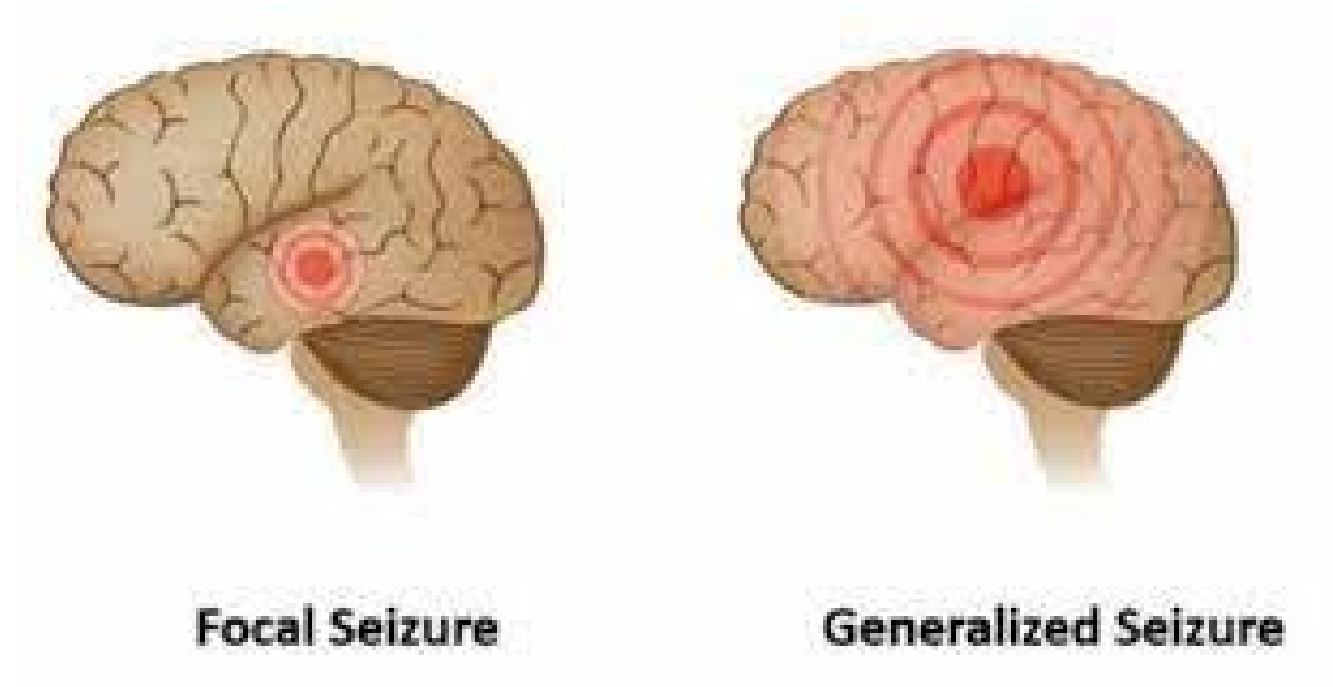
- ❖ Impaired Awareness

- ❖ **Generalized**

- ❖ Absence

- ❖ Tonic-Clonic

- ❖ **Unknown**



Focal: Aware Seizures

Person is

- ❖ Aware/Alert
- ❖ Rhythmic movements 1 side or part of body
- ❖ Sensory and Autonomic Symptoms
 - ❖ Tingling
 - ❖ Sounds
 - ❖ Smells
 - ❖ Tastes
 - ❖ Upset Stomach
 - ❖ Visual distortions
- ❖ Cognitive and Emotional Symptoms
 - ❖ Déjà vu
 - ❖ Hallucinations
 - ❖ Fear/Anxiety
 - ❖ Feeling funny/indescribable

Typical Length: 1-3 Minutes

Often confused with

- ❖ Acting Out
- ❖ Psychosomatic Illness
- ❖ Mystical Experience
- ❖ Illicit Drug Use

Focal: Impaired Awareness Seizures

Confused, unable to respond

May begin with blank dazed stare

AUTOMATISMS

Clumsy/disoriented movements (aimless walking)

Unable to talk/words don't make sense

May get combative if restrained

After seizure:

- ❖ Confused
- ❖ Tired
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ Nausea

May be confused with:

- ❖ Substance abuse (alcohol, illicit drugs)
- ❖ Aggressive behavior




Typical Length: 1-3 Minutes

Generalized Absence Seizures

- ❖ Pause in activity with blank stare
 - ❖ Brief lack of awareness
 - ❖ Possible chewing/blinking
 - ❖ Return to full awareness almost immediately
 - ❖ May occur many times/day
-
- ❖ Often confused with
 - ❖ Daydreaming
 - ❖ Attention Problems (ADHD)

Typical Length: < 20 seconds



Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizures



- ❖ Sudden, hoarse cry
- ❖ Loss of consciousness (fall hazard)
- ❖ Stiffening of arms and legs, then rhythmic jerking
- ❖ Shallow breathing
- ❖ Drooling
- ❖ Possible loss of bowel/bladder control or vomiting
- ❖ Skin, nails, lips may turn blue

Typical Length: 1-3 minutes

- ❖ After seizure:
 - ❖ Confusion
 - ❖ Headache
 - ❖ Tired
 - ❖ Sore
 - ❖ Difficulty talking

Seizure Action Plans

- ❖ Student Specific Instructions
- ❖ Seizure First Aid
- ❖ When to call 9-1-1
- ❖ Rescue medication instructions
- ❖ Emergency Contact Information

SEIZURE ACTION PLAN (SAP)  

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____
 Address: _____ Phone: _____
 Emergency Contact/Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Seizure Information

Seizure Type	How Long It Lasts	How Often	What Happens

How to respond to a seizure (check all that apply)

First aid – **Stay, Safe, Side.** Notify emergency contact at _____
 Give rescue therapy according to SAP Call 911 for transport to _____
 Notify emergency contact Other _____

First aid for any seizure

STAY calm, keep calm, begin timing seizure
 Keep me SAFE – remove harmful objects, don't restrain, protect head
 SIDE – turn on side if not awake, keep airway clear, don't put objects in mouth
 STAY until recovered from seizure
 Swipe magnet for VNS
 Write down what happens _____
 Other _____

When to call 911

Seizure with loss of consciousness longer than 5 minutes, not responding to rescue med if available
 Repeated seizures longer than 10 minutes, no recovery between them, not responding to rescue med if available
 Difficulty breathing after seizure
 Serious injury occurs or suspected, seizure in water

When to call your provider first

Change in seizure type, number or pattern
 Person does not return to usual behavior (i.e., confused for a long period)
 First time seizure that stops on its' own
 Other medical problems or pregnancy need to be checked

When rescue therapy may be needed:

WHEN AND WHAT TO DO
 If seizure (cluster, # or length) _____
 Name of Med/Rx _____ How much to give (dose) _____
 How to give _____

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What **NOT** to do!

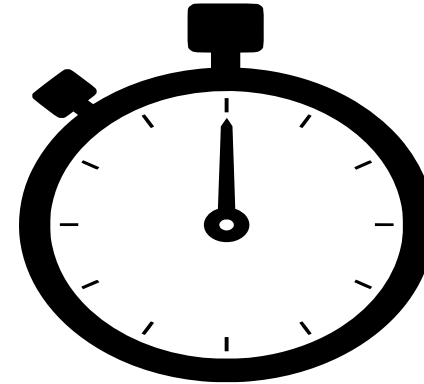
See your Handout

3 Steps to Seizure First Aid

❖ Stay + Time

❖ Safe

❖ Side



3-5 minutes → MERT

Recovery (Postictal) Phase

WHAT IS IT?

- ❖ Time immediately after seizure
- ❖ Before returning to usual state of awareness/function
- ❖ Depends on the type of seizure

HOW TO HELP

- ❖ Take person to a safe place to rest
- ❖ Monitor if alert/aware
- ❖ Remain until another adult arrives

FOLLOW SEIZURE ACTION PLAN!

Seizure Emergencies: Status Epilepticus

Continuous

Prolonged/repeated

Generalized seizure
>3-5 minutes

Seizure Emergencies

When to call 9-1-1
Activate MERT

Call 9-1-1/Activate MERT if:

- ✓ Seizure lasts too long
- ✓ Seizure with loss of consciousness over 5 minutes
- ✓ Not responding to rescue medicine
- ✓ Not typical seizure type (check with student's seizure action plan)
- ✓ Repeated seizures >10 minutes
(no recovery between seizures, not responding to rescue medicines)
- ✓ Difficulty breathing after a seizure
- ✓ Serious injury seen or suspected
- ✓ Seizure in water
- ✓ Student/family requests evaluation



MERT Team

Seizure Emergency Response