



Advice Sheet for First Seizure (Child/Young Person)

What is a seizure?

Watching your child have a seizure is a very frightening experience. You may even think that your child is dying. However, seizures are not as serious as they look. A seizure is a disturbance of electrical activity in the brain that causes messages to become mixed up. There are different sorts of seizures (sometimes called “fits” or “convulsions”).

A child having a seizure may become unconscious and unable to respond to you. They may fall to the floor and there may be signs such as visible jerking of the limbs, eye movement, or twitching from around their mouth. They may produce a lot of saliva so need to be positioned onto their side if possible.

Is it Epilepsy?

A single seizure does not mean your child has epilepsy – this may be the only seizure that your child ever has. If however your child has more seizures, they will require further investigations, firstly for review by the GP.

What should you do if your child has another seizure where they are unconscious and jerking?

Do:

- Assess the situation.
- Note the time – how long did the seizure last?
- Move objects away that may cause possible injury.
- Put something soft under your child’s head.
- Turn them on their side as soon as possible.
- Stay with your child.
- Talk to them gently and reassure.

Do Not:

- Panic
- Move the child unless they are in danger.
- Restrict their body movements (hold down)
- Place anything in their mouth.
- Give anything by mouth until they are fully recovered.

Call an ambulance (999) if:

- You are frightened or need help.
- The seizure continues for MORE than FIVE minutes.
- If another seizure follows on from this one
- If your child is injured
- If you are at all concerned about their breathing.
- You believe they need medical attention.

If you have **not** called for an ambulance because their seizure is short lived, you will need to inform your G.P or a health professional about the seizure, what you saw and how long it lasted.

What should you tell other people?

It is always a good idea to let other people know that your child has had a “first seizure.” e.g. Family, friends, your child’s school/playgroup, nursery, or childminder.

Please share First Aid information with them.

<https://www.sja.org.uk/first-aid-advice/seizure/>

Will my child be safe?

It is important to let your child take part in all their normal activities, but care needs to be taken around swimming, cycling, cooking and contact sports. Your child’s school will find this link very helpful.

<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/living/education-and-epilepsy/school-support>

If you need more information you should talk to:

Your G.P, school nurse, health visitor or health professional.

Useful telephone numbers and web sites:

Ways to contact NHS 111

By phone: Call 111 for free from a landline or mobile phone.

Online: Visit 111.nhs.uk to answer questions about your symptoms. This is for people aged five and over.

Text Relay: Call 18001 111 using the [Relay UK app](#).

British Sign Language (BSL): BSL speakers can use signvideo.co.uk/nhs111.

In other languages: Call 111 and ask for an interpreter.

Epilepsy Action: www.epilepsy.org.uk

Epilepsy Society <https://epilepsysociety.org.uk/children>

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Reviewed with new emergency contact numbers added October 2025 by Carl Graham Harris, Community Paediatrics Team, Cambridgeshire Children’s Community Services.