

Epilepsy and Seizure First Aid in the workplace

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological disorder that causes a person to have 2 or more recurrent, unprovoked seizures in their lifetime.

Types of seizures and their symptoms

A seizure occurs when there is brief excessive electrical activity in the brain. While there are more than 20 different kinds of seizures the most common are:

Generalized (affects the whole brain)		Partial (affects part of the brain)	
Absence	Tonic Clonic	Simple Partial	Complex Partial
<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blank dazed stare Sometimes blinking and chewing motion Lasts a few seconds 	<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of consciousness Muscle rigidity Convulsions Lasts 1-3 mins 	<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full consciousness Jerking of one part of the body Sensory experiences Possible feeling of fear or insecurity 	<p>Characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered consciousness Being out of touch with surroundings Random and purposeless activities which may include picking at clothing and/or aimless walking Lasts 1 -3 mins
<p>What to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed Document in Seizure Observation record 	<p>What to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn person on side Remove objects/glasses Use something soft under head Stay calm & stay with the person Time seizure 	<p>What to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No First Aid needed 	<p>What to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay calm and reassure others Track time Check for medical I.D. Do not restrain Gently direct away from hazards Stay until they are fully alert and aware If seizure lasts 5 minutes or another seizure begins before full consciousness is achieved, follow the emergency protocol

A seizure is an emergency in the following scenarios:

- A first time seizure
- A convulsive seizure lasting more than 5 minutes
- Repeated seizures without regaining consciousness
- More seizures than usual or change in type
- Person is injured, has diabetes or is pregnant
- Seizure occurs in water
- Normal breathing does not resume
- Parents request emergency evaluation

Treatments

For many persons with Epilepsy one or more of the following are able to help them in controlling seizures: Anti-seizure medication, surgery, Vagus Nerve Stimulator (VNS), Responsive Neuro stimulation (RNS), Ketogenic diet and medical marijuana.

Legal rights of an employee with Epilepsy:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act protects job applicants in a setting of 15 or more employees. The employer is not allowed to ask health-related questions until after making job offer and the person with Epilepsy is not required to disclose their condition. The Employer may not rescind the job offer if applicant is able to perform the function of the job with/without accommodations.
- An applicant may request accommodations after accepting the job offer even if they did not disclose they had Epilepsy prior to accepting the position. An employer must implement accommodations in order to meet the employees' needs as long as it does not result in significant difficulty or expense. In addition an employer may not tell other employees accommodations have been put in place because this would disclose the employee has a disability.
- Accommodations may include: changing shift schedule, allowing extra breaks to take medication, having a private area to rest after a seizure, leave to seek or recuperate from treatment, taking medical leave without a specified return date, reassignment to a vacant position if the employee is no longer able to perform their current job
- If an employee has a seizure at work, the employer may not tell other employees the person has epilepsy.