

Seizure Type	Characteristics	First Aid
Tonic-Clonic (formerly called Grand Mal)	<p>Typically 1-3 minutes in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Person may cry out, will lose consciousness, and will fall to the ground</li> <li>2. Limbs stiffen</li> <li>3. Limbs jerk</li> <li>4. May involve               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. loss of bladder and/or bowel control</li> <li>b. shallow breathing</li> <li>c. bluish or gray skin colour</li> <li>d. drooling</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. May be followed by confusion, fatigue, or headache</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stay calm</b> and let the seizure run its course; <u>do not</u> restrain the person</li> <li>• <b>Time the seizure</b>: you need to call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes</li> <li>• <b>Protect the person from injury</b>: if necessary, ease the person to the floor and move hard/sharp objects out of the way and place something soft (e.g. pillow or jacket) under the person's head</li> <li>• <b>Loosen anything tight around the person's neck and check for medical identification</b></li> <li>• <b>Do not put anything in the person's mouth</b> (no one can swallow their tongue)</li> <li>• <b>Gently roll the person onto their side</b> to allow saliva and other fluids to drain and keep the airway clear</li> <li>• After the seizure, <b>stay with the person</b> and reassure them</li> </ul>
Absence (formerly called Petit Mal)	<p>Typically lasts less than 10 seconds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sudden blank stare</li> <li>2. impaired awareness</li> <li>3. may involve rapid eye blinking, eyes rolling upwards</li> <li>4. alertness regained quickly after seizure</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid generally not required</li> <li>• If seizures occur in a cluster, remove the person from any activities that could pose a risk (e.g. swimming)</li> </ul>
Simple Partial	<p>Typically seconds to minutes in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness retained but the person is not in control of symptoms</li> <li>2. May involve               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. jerking in one area of the body that may spread to other areas</li> <li>b. an unusual sensation, such as seeing, smelling, or hearing things that aren't there</li> <li>c. a sudden overwhelming feeling, such as joy or fear</li> <li>d. symptoms such as stomach upset or flushing</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. May be referred to as an aura (a sudden unusual sensation,</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First aid generally not required</li> <li>• Stay calm and stay with the person. Offer emotional support and reassurance.</li> </ul>

	feeling or movement) that precedes another seizure type	
Complex Partial	<p>Typically one to two minutes in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Altered awareness</li> <li>2. Dreamlike state</li> <li>3. Appears dazed and confused</li> <li>4. Often begins with an aura</li> <li>5. Typically involves random purposeless movements such as chewing motions, picking motions in the air, or pulling at clothing</li> <li>6. Often followed by confusion and disorientation</li> <li>7. May progress to a tonic-clonic seizure</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stay with the person</b> but let the seizure run its course. Speak calmly and explain what is happening.</li> <li>• <b>Move dangerous objects</b> out of the way</li> <li>• <b>Gently guide the person</b> away from danger or block access to hazards but do not restrain the person</li> <li>• After the seizure, talk reassuringly to the person</li> </ul>
Atonic (also called Drop Attacks)	<p>Typically a few seconds in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sudden loss of muscle tone</li> <li>2. A fall, dropping objects, head nodding</li> <li>3. Typically a loss of awareness but a quick return to consciousness</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As seizures occur suddenly, it is often hard to intervene in time</li> <li>• Check for injury following a fall</li> </ul>
Myoclonic	<p>Typically a few seconds in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A sudden jerk of a body part, such as an arm or a leg</li> <li>2. Sometimes a fall</li> <li>3. Awareness retained</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As seizures occur suddenly, it is often hard to intervene in time</li> <li>• Check for injury following a fall</li> </ul>
Infantile Spasms	<p>A spasm typically lasts a few seconds but often occurs in a cluster of 5 to 50 or more</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A sudden flexing of head and arms</li> <li>2. A sudden drawing up of knees, raising both arms</li> <li>3. A sudden body flexing at waist</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect from any potential injury</li> <li>• Doctor should be consulted immediately</li> </ul>

From "Seizures and First Aid" published by the Edmonton Epilepsy Association.