

Seizure First Aid

How can I help my child during a seizure?

Caring for a child during a seizure can be frightening and stressful. However, in most cases, only a few simple steps are needed to ensure their safety and protection. Most seizures will stop on their own within a few minutes.

Seizure first aid focuses on keeping a child safe during the seizure. Review this information with anyone who cares for your child:

- Never leave a child alone during a seizure.
- Pay attention to what the seizure looks like, and time how long it lasts if possible.
 - Use your phone to take a video of the seizure if you can do so safely.
- Prevent injury by moving sharp or dangerous objects away from the child.
 - If the child is wandering or confused during the seizure, protect them from dangers such as open water, streets and intersections, and stairways and ledges.
- Make the child comfortable. Loosen any tight clothing around their neck or waist. If the child is standing, help them lie down in a safe area.
- Prevent injury to their head by placing something soft underneath, or gently support their head with your hands.
- Do not hold the child down. This can lead to increased agitation, aggression, or even physical injury.
- Do not put anything into your child's mouth unless directed by your medical team.
 - Some rescue medications are prescribed to be placed inside the cheek.
 - Follow instructions given by your medical team.
- When able, lay the child on their side, with their mouth pointed to the ground.
 - This prevents breathing in saliva or vomit and helps open the airway.
- The child may have irregular or shallow breathing, or even appear to stop breathing, during the seizure because of muscle contractions in the chest and diaphragm.
 - Breathing will return to normal once this part of the seizure ends.
 - CPR or "mouth-to-mouth" rescue breathing is rarely necessary during a seizure.
 - Call 911 or do CPR if the child is not breathing or their heart stops when the seizure ends.

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- Treat the child in a sensitive and caring manner, and encourage others to do the same.
 - The child may feel embarrassed or confused about the seizure.
 - Some children experience loss of bowel or bladder control during a seizure. Assist them in getting cleaned up.
 - Explain to them in a very simple way what has happened once they are alert and able to understand.

When should I call 911 for medical assistance?

The decision to call for help during a seizure will depend on the frequency and type of your child's seizures. Your child's neurology provider will provide appropriate guidelines.

If you aren't sure what to do, it is ALWAYS okay to call for help.

Call 911 for help if:

- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
- Seizures are occurring closer together than is usual for your child
- Your child is having back-to-back seizures without waking up in between
- Breathing becomes difficult, your child's lips turn blue, or your child appears to be choking
- The seizure occurs in water
- There is concern for injury to the head or body during the seizure
- Rescue medications are not stopping or controlling the seizures

Resources and References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/epilepsy/about/first-aid.htm>

<https://www.epilepsy.com/recognition/seizure-first-aid>