

Seizure Rescue Medication

Seizures can be harmful if they do not stop. Rescue medications can shorten a convulsive seizure or a cluster of frequent small seizures. Rescue medications can also help you manage typical seizures at home without needing emergency medical treatment. If your child's seizure appears different or you feel uncomfortable with their rescue medication, you can always call 9-1-1.

How will I know if my child needs a rescue medication?

Your child's neurology health team will discuss seizure rescue medication with you and your child. Your child may need rescue medication if they have convulsive seizures, prolonged seizures that do not stop on their own, or clusters of seizures that happen multiple times within a short period.

Rescue medications may also be important for children living far away from emergency services.

Seizure rescue medications may also be prescribed if there is concern for increased risk for seizures based on an electroencephalogram (EEG), even if your child has not had a seizure in the past.

What are the options for seizure rescue medications?

There are several options for seizure rescue medications. All the options will be discussed with your child's neurology provider. They will evaluate your child's age, type of seizures, other medications, and side effects and will discuss different options that will work best for your child's lifestyle.

Common Rescue Medications

Diazepam

Diazepam is a benzodiazepine. It helps shorten prolonged convulsive seizures but can also be good for other types of prolonged events including clusters of seizures. Side effects include fatigue, sleepiness, and rarely, respiratory distress.

Some different forms include:



Diastat: Diastat is a gel form of diazepam that is given rectally. It is best used for younger and school-aged children. It is dosed based on your child's age and weight. It will require education on administration and will be discussed with you before it is prescribed. It is prepackaged and dialed to the appropriate dose by the pharmacy. There are two applicators per package.



Valtoco: Valtoco is a spray formation of diazepam that is given nasally. It has been used primarily for clusters of seizures. It is a good option for older children or children that have difficulty receiving rectal medications. It is dosed based on your child's age and weight. Administration instructions will be given before it is prescribed.

Seizure Rescue Medication

Midazolam

Midazolam is a benzodiazepine. It has been helpful for shortening prolonged seizures or clusters of seizures. It is dosed based on the patient's weight and age.

- **Midazolam vial:** Midazolam can be prescribed in a liquid vial that is drawn up and administered in the cheek using a needleless syringe or used with an atomizer for nasal administration. Midazolam vials can also come in prefilled syringes. Depending on what form your pharmacy carries, it may require you to draw up the medication from the vial for administration during a seizure. Midazolam given buccally, or inside the cheek, should be given only as directed. Midazolam given intranasally may cause some irritation to the nasal passage. Side effects include drowsiness, sedation, or irritation. Respiratory distress is rare.



[Device for intranasal administration]



[Buccal administration]



Nayzilam®: Nayzilam is a form of midazolam that is prepackaged in single-dose nasal applicators. Each dose is in a 5 mg dose. Each package contains two single-dose applicators; each is for single use only. Your medical team will discuss administration instructions based on how long your child's seizures are and how often they occur.

Clonazepam

Clonazepam is a benzodiazepine. It has been helpful in treating prolonged seizures, specifically for clusters of seizures. It is dosed based on your child's weight and age. Common side effects include fatigue, drooling, and irritability.



- **Clonazepam oral disintegrating tablets:** Oral disintegrating tablets (ODT) are small tablets that dissolve when they come into contact with the inside of your child's cheek or under the tongue. These tablets come in different dosage strengths based on your child's age and weight. Specific education from your neurology provider will be given to you about how and when to administer this medication during a prolonged seizure or cluster of seizures.

How do I talk to other caregivers about my child's rescue medication?

Your child's care team will complete a detailed seizure action plan for your child. This document can be given to other caregivers, school administrators, school nurses, and family members. We encourage you to make copies and share this with anyone who may help care for your child. This will provide information about basic seizure first aid; when and how much rescue medication to give; and any other

Seizure Rescue Medication

other interventions that may be needed during a seizure, such as using the magnet for a vagal nerve stimulator (VNS).

Information to Remember about Rescue Medications

- **There are frequent advancements made in seizure rescue medications.** Talk to your child's neurology provider about any new rescue medication options. It is important to tell them if you feel uncomfortable giving your child their prescribed rescue medication or have questions about when to give it.
- **Rescue medications have an expiration date.** You should be aware of any expiration dates. If your child's rescue medication comes in multiple dose packages, make sure to note the expiration date for each dose if divided between locations.
- **Rescue medications should be kept in appropriate environments.** Many medications will lose the ability to work if left in extreme temperatures (e.g., freezing or extremely hot). This includes medication left in hot cars during summer months. Ask your pharmacist for particular recommendations on where to keep rescue medications.
- **Follow the directions** closely for giving your child's rescue medication, and ask your child's medical provider any questions about how and when to give the medication.

If you are concerned about not being able to obtain your child's rescue medication, call your child's medical provider immediately.

What do I do if the rescue medication does not stop the seizure?

If the seizure does not resolve after you administer rescue medication, you should maintain your child's safety and call 911. In some cases, an extra dose of rescue medication can be given if your child's seizure does not resolve after the first dose. This option should be discussed with your child's neurology medical provider, and if appropriate, instructions will be given to you on how and when to give more medication.

Resources and References:

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

<https://www.epilepsy.com/preparedness-safety/staying-safe>