



## Epilepsy

*BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This document provides general information on the topic and is not intended to replace team assessment, decision-making, or medical advice. This Fact Sheet is one of one regarding epilepsy.*

### Definitions

**Epilepsy:** A brain disorder involving repeated seizures.

**Seizure:** An electrical burst within the brain.

### Facts

Signs of seizures vary from a range of a sensation of pins and needles or an episode of confusion or inattention (not paying attention) to a collapse with loss of consciousness (level of alertness). Epilepsy occurs in 10-30% of individuals with an intellectual disability.

### Recommended Action and Prevention Strategy

1. Seek medical advice if the individual experiences a seizure for the first time.
2. Watch the movements and length of time of any seizure and record your observations.
3. Seizures are dangerous when they last long enough to cause a lack of oxygen to the brain. Unless otherwise instructed, seek immediate medical help if:
  - a. the seizure lasts more than five minutes
  - b. breathing or consciousness does not return after the seizure stops
  - c. a second seizure follows immediately
  - d. the person is pregnant and has a seizure
  - e. the person has diabetes and has a seizure, unless otherwise directed by the physician (Remember to treat for low blood sugar urgently (immediately), as directed.)
  - f. the person was injured during the seizure.



4. Even mild seizures may require treatment because they can be dangerous, especially during activities like driving, climbing on a ladder, or bathing or swimming unsupervised.
5. Train all care providers in seizure first aid.

### References

Seizures. University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Retrieved 06/16/15 from <http://www.upmc.com/patients-visitors/education/neurology/Pages/seizures.aspx>.

Seizures and Epilepsy: Frequently Asked Questions. Brainline: Preventing, Treating, and Living with Traumatic Brain Injury. Retrieved 06/16/15 from [http://www.brainline.org/content/2008/07/seizures-and-epilepsy-frequently-asked-questions\\_pageall.html](http://www.brainline.org/content/2008/07/seizures-and-epilepsy-frequently-asked-questions_pageall.html).

Seizure First Aid. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved 06/16/15 from <http://www.cdc.gov/epilepsy/basics/first-aid.htm>.