

Epilepsy and Seizures Resource Page

Optional Video: "Seizure First Aid." Copies of video are available through the CDD Resource Center (505) 272-0281 or through the Epilepsy Foundation of America 1(800) EFA-1000. <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/>

*A note about dentures: Dr. Ray Lyons DDS recommends that dentures be left in during seizures; properly fitting dentures should not cause a problem – but as a prevention measure make sure they do fit properly.

There are different types of seizures in the group Generalized Seizures

- **Absence seizures.** Absence seizures, previously known as petit mal seizures, often occur in children and are characterized by staring into space or by subtle body movements, such as eye blinking or lip smacking. These seizures may occur in clusters and cause a brief loss of awareness.
- **Tonic seizures.** Tonic seizures cause stiffening of your muscles. These seizures usually affect muscles in your back, arms and legs and may cause you to fall to the ground.
- **Atonic seizures.** Atonic seizures, also known as drop seizures, cause a loss of muscle control, which may cause you to suddenly collapse or fall down.
- **Clonic seizures.** Clonic seizures are associated with repeated or rhythmic, jerking muscle movements. These seizures usually affect the neck, face and arms.
- **Myoclonic seizures.** Myoclonic seizures usually appear as sudden brief jerks or twitches of your arms and legs.
- **Tonic-clonic seizures.** Tonic-clonic seizures, previously known as grand mal seizures, are the most dramatic type of epileptic seizure and can cause an abrupt loss of consciousness, body stiffening and shaking, and sometimes loss of bladder control or biting your tongue.

The most **common cause** of seizures is epilepsy. But not every person who has a seizure has epilepsy. Sometimes seizures happen because of:

- High fever, which can be associated with an infection such as meningitis
- Lack of sleep
- Low blood sodium (hyponatremia), which can happen with diuretic therapy or intense exercise
- Medications, such as certain pain relievers, antidepressants or smoking cessation therapies, that lower the seizure threshold
- Head trauma that causes an area of bleeding in the brain
- Stroke and brain tumor

- Illegal or recreational drugs, such as amphetamines or cocaine
- Alcohol abuse, during sudden withdrawal or extreme intoxication
- COVID-19 infection

Facts about Epilepsy and Seizures

- You can't catch epilepsy. It's never contagious. It is a condition, **NOT** a disease.
- The cause is unknown for 70% of the people who have epilepsy – the remaining cases are caused by head injury, stroke, brain tumors, infections, lead poisoning, genetic conditions, problems in brain development before birth, or injury during birth.
- Every year 150,000 Americans will develop epilepsy for the first time.
- It can develop at any age, but new cases are most common among children and the elderly.
- Epilepsy affects both men and women equally.
- Seizures are a symptom of epilepsy, but other things (i.e. high fever) can affect the brain enough to cause a seizure.