



**The Leeds
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

First fit advice

Information for patients

You have been assessed in the Emergency Department and we think you have had a fit or seizure. Following assessment, we think it is safe to discharge you home into the care of your family or a friend / carer.

This leaflet will provide you with some information about seizures.

What is a fit or seizure?

A seizure occurs when there is an abnormal surge of electrical activity in the brain. This can lead to loss of consciousness shaking or jerking of the limbs. Sometimes during a seizure, people can bite their tongue or pass urine involuntarily. After the seizure, it can take some time to come round, people can be confused or feel very tired. Other people can experience other forms of seizures where they appear to go 'vacant'.

What if it happens again?

It is difficult to predict whether you will have another seizure. If another seizure was to occur there are some measures that your friends or family can take to keep you as safe as possible.

Do:

- Try to stay calm and note the time that it started and how long it lasts.
- Clear a space around the person.

- If possible, place a cushion under their head.
- Loosen tight clothing around the neck and remove glasses.
- Once the seizure has stopped, place the person onto their side (recovery position).
- Stay with the person until any confusion subsides.

Don't:

- Move them unless in immediate danger.
- Try to restrain the person.
- Put anything between their teeth or in their mouth.
- Give any medication during a seizure.
- Give anything to eat or drink until fully recovered.

When to ring 999 and ask for an ambulance:

- If a seizure lasts for more than 5 minutes.
- If one seizure follows another without recovery in between.
- If an injury occurs or water has been inhaled e.g. in the bath.

Other advice

While waiting for your appointment in the first fit clinic you can resume your normal lifestyle, but we advise the following:

- Try to avoid things that may trigger seizures e.g. poor sleep, alcohol, stress.
- Make people that you are with aware that you are at risk of having a seizure.

- Do not lock the toilet or bathroom door in case you need help.
- Take showers rather than baths.
- Avoid swimming and other activities where there may be significant risk of injury if you fall e.g. climbing & wear a helmet if cycling or horse riding.
- Inform your employer, especially if you work with ladders or operate machinery.
- You should avoid operating any heavy machinery.
- If you have small children, it is advised to have someone with you when you bathe them and consider carrying them in a car seat on stairs.

What if it happens again?

Seizures are unpredictable so for your own safety, and the safety of others, **you must NOT drive for 6 months after a first suspected seizure or until you are told otherwise by a neurologist.** If you continue to have seizures, this may be extended to 12 months.

If you continue to drive, your insurance will be invalid. You are legally obliged to inform the DVLA and your insurer about your seizure. Details for the DVLA can be found on page 5 of this leaflet.

Further information

- Further information on driving and informing the DVLA can be found at <https://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla>
- More advice about caring for young children can be found here <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/caring-children>



References

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg137/chapter/1-guidance#following-a-first-seizure>
<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/daily-life/safety/questions>



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