NHS
Countess of Chester Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice for parents after a child's first seizure

Information for parents and carers

What is a seizure?

Watching your child have a seizure is a very frightening experience. However, seizures are not as serious as they look and do not cause brain damage. A seizure is a disturbance of electrical activity in the brain that causes messages to become mixed up. There are different kinds of seizures (sometimes called "fits" or "convulsions"). Often children become unconscious and are not able to respond to you. They may fall and there can be jerking of the limbs.

Is it Epilepsy?

A single seizure does not mean your child has epilepsy - this may be the only seizure that your child ever has. Almost 70% of children do not have a second seizure. Even if your child does go on to have repeated seizures, this is not always due to epilepsy and there are other reasons why children have fits, convulsions or seizures. If your child has more seizures this will usually be within 1 year. If this happens then your child will need further assessment and might require treatment. If a child is having recurrent epileptic seizures then they may need other investigations.

What should you do if your child has another seizure where they are unconscious and jerking?

Do:

- Stay calm
- Loosen any tight clothing around the neck
- Note the time - how long did it last?
- Move objects that may cause injury
- Put something soft under the head
- Turn on side during seizure (if possible) or once seizure has stopped
- Reassure child throughout the seizure
- Video on camera phone if possible.

Do not:

- Panic
- Try to move or restrain the child during seizure
- Place anything in the mouth
- Give the child anything to drink until fully recovered.

When should I call an ambulance?

- If you are worried or need help
- The seizure continues for more than 5 minutes
- One seizure follows another
- Your child is injured or you are concerned about their breathing.

What should I do after the seizure has finished?

Keep on side (if possible) until fully recovered, it may be useful to then document what has happened after the seizure has finished whilst fresh in your mind.

Consider:

- What the child was doing prior to the seizure
- Describe what happened during the seizure e.g. all arms and legs moving, just one side moving
- How long did it last?
- What the child was like after the seizure.

What safety measures should I take?

- It is a good idea to inform care providers that your child has had a first seizure such as family, friends, child minder, school, and nursery.

- It is important to let your child take part in all their normal activities; however you need to take extra care when thinking about bathing, swimming, climbing, cycling and cooking.

Useful sources of information

Epilepsy Action: **www.epilepsy.org.uk**
The National Society for Epilepsy: **www.epilepsysociety.org.uk**
National Institute of Clinical Excellence: **www.nice.org.uk**

If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, electronically and in other languages on request. Please contact the Patient Experience Team on:

Telephone 01244 366066 or
Email coch.patientexperience@nhs.net

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若是你想索取這份傳單的中文譯本，請聯絡「病人預約中心」或向其中一名職員查詢。

Si vous voulez cette brochure en français, contactez le bureau des rendez-vous ou demandez à un membre du personnel.

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