

Seizure Type	Characteristics	First Aid
Tonic-Clonic (formerly called Grand Mal)	<p>Typically 1-3 minutes in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Person may cry out, will lose consciousness, and will fall to the ground 2. Limbs stiffen 3. Limbs jerk 4. May involve <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. loss of bladder and/or bowel control b. shallow breathing c. bluish or gray skin colour d. drooling 5. May be followed by confusion, fatigue, or headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm and let the seizure run its course; do not restrain the person • Time the seizure: you need to call 911 if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes • Protect the person from injury: if necessary, ease the person to the floor and move hard/sharp objects out of the way and place something soft (e.g. pillow or jacket) under the person's head • Loosen anything tight around the person's neck and check for medical identification • Do not put anything in the person's mouth (no one can swallow their tongue) • Gently roll the person onto their side to allow saliva and other fluids to drain and keep the airway clear • After the seizure, stay with the person and reassure them
Absence (formerly called Petit Mal)	<p>Typically lasts less than 10 seconds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sudden blank stare 2. impaired awareness 3. may involve rapid eye blinking, eyes rolling upwards 4. alertness regained quickly after seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid generally not required • If seizures occur in a cluster, remove the person from any activities that could pose a risk (e.g. swimming)
Simple Partial	<p>Typically seconds to minutes in length</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness retained but the person is not in control of symptoms 2. May involve <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. jerking in one area of the body that may spread to other areas b. an unusual sensation, such as seeing, smelling, or hearing things that aren't there c. a sudden overwhelming feeling, such as joy or fear d. symptoms such as stomach upset or flushing 3. May be referred to as an aura (a sudden unusual sensation, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid generally not required • Stay calm and stay with the person. Offer emotional support and reassurance.

	feeling or movement) that precedes another seizure type	
Complex Partial	Typically one to two minutes in length <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Altered awareness 2. Dreamlike state 3. Appears dazed and confused 4. Often begins with an aura 5. Typically involves random purposeless movements such as chewing motions, picking motions in the air, or pulling at clothing 6. Often followed by confusion and disorientation 7. May progress to a tonic-clonic seizure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay with the person but let the seizure run its course. Speak calmly and explain what is happening. • Move dangerous objects out of the way • Gently guide the person away from danger or block access to hazards but do not restrain the person • After the seizure, talk reassuringly to the person
Atonic (also called Drop Attacks)	Typically a few seconds in length <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sudden loss of muscle tone 2. A fall, dropping objects, head nodding 3. Typically a loss of awareness but a quick return to consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As seizures occur suddenly, it is often hard to intervene in time • Check for injury following a fall
Myoclonic	Typically a few seconds in length <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sudden jerk of a body part, such as an arm or a leg 2. Sometimes a fall 3. Awareness retained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As seizures occur suddenly, it is often hard to intervene in time • Check for injury following a fall
Infantile Spasms	A spasm typically lasts a few seconds but often occurs in a cluster of 5 to 50 or more <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sudden flexing of head and arms 2. A sudden drawing up of knees, raising both arms 3. A sudden body flexing at waist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect from any potential injury • Doctor should be consulted immediately

From "Seizures and First Aid" published by the Edmonton Epilepsy Association.