

Epilepsy 101:

Coping with Seizures in a College Environment



What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. It's also called a seizure disorder. When a person has two or more unprovoked seizures, they are considered to have epilepsy.

A seizure is a temporary electrical disturbance in the brain. Seizures can manifest themselves in different ways, including convulsions, staring, brief muscle jerks, picking at clothing, or collapsing. Seizures typically only last for a minute or two, but can result in confusion afterwards.

What to Do If Someone is Having a Seizure

If someone is having a tonic-clonic (grand mal) seizure, remember to **STAY CALM!**

Make sure that the person is out of the way of any harmful or sharp objects.

Place something soft (ie, a jacket or a pillow) under their head.

Loosen ties or anything that might restrict the person's airway.

Turn the person gently onto their side to keep an open airway.

Time the seizure.

Do **NOT** put anything in the person's mouth.

Do **NOT** hold the person down or restrict their body.

It is only necessary to call 911 if:

This is the person's first seizure or you are unsure of their seizure history.

The seizure lasts for more than five minutes.

The person has had any trauma as a result of their seizure (ie, hit their head, bleeding).

What Should I Do If I Know Someone With Epilepsy?

- If they're comfortable, talk to them about it. Depending on the individual, it might help to learn how epilepsy affects them, and how you can make things easier for them. Be sure to respect their privacy.
- Find out what to do in case a seizure occurs. Although a person's seizures might be controlled, a seizure can still occur.
- Make sure to have campus police and health center information readily available.

What Should I Do If I Have Epilepsy?

- Make sure to maintain a healthy lifestyle, despite your busy schedule. Try visiting the campus recreation center or the health center to get some tips about staying healthy. And, of course, make to get a lot of rest!
- Tell your peer advisor, your roommate, or anyone that you see regularly about your epilepsy. It's important that they know what to do in case you have a seizure.
- Contact the campus health center and make sure they know you have epilepsy. This will ensure that in the event of a seizure, they can take appropriate action. Also make sure they have any emergency contact information.
- Contact the office of disabilities on campus. The staff can help you find ways to make college life easier and eliminate any obstacles your epilepsy might cause.



For more information about epilepsy, contact the Epilepsy Foundation of Georgia at (404)527-7155 or visit www.epilepsyga.org.

This material was provided due to the support of The CarMax Foundation.