Seizure (a.k.a. fit or convulsion)

1 in 20 people will experience a seizure, fit or convulsion during their life.

What is a seizure?

There are many types of seizures.

Seizures can be momentary, and the casualty may not even realise they are having a fit. However, seizures can also cause violent, out-of-control thrashing movements.

A seizure is caused by a disturbance in the electrical activity in the brain. It can be caused by lack of oxygen to the brain, by a bang on the head, a brain tumour, a cardiac arrest, raised temperature, drugs, fainting and many other things. Sometimes doctors can’t tell why a seizure happened.

If someone is having a seizure:

1. Ease them to the ground if they are on a chair or standing up.
2. Remove any objects against which they could hurt themselves.
3. Ask bystanders to move away and protect the casualty's dignity.
4. Protect their head (e.g. with a pillow or clothes).
5. Loosen any tight clothes.
6. Stay with them and talk to them reassuringly throughout the seizure.
7. Once the seizure has stopped, check that they are breathing
8. Put them in the recovery position if they are unresponsive.

If they are not breathing, start CPR.
Phone for an ambulance if:

- it is their first seizure
- the seizure lasts for more than 5 minutes
- they have another seizure straight afterwards
- they are injured
- they have had seizures before and this one is different
- they are unresponsive for more than 5 minutes afterwards

**NOTE:**

- Never put your fingers or anything in their mouth to try and prevent them biting their tongue
- Do not try and move them unless they are in immediate danger (i.e. near something dangerous that you can’t move away from them)
- Do not restrain their movements while they are fitting
- Do not give them anything to eat or drink until fully recovered
- Never try and ‘bring them round’

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