

# Seizures

## What is a Seizure?

A seizure is an electrical storm that occurs in the brain. The brain is made up of billions of cells joined together. There is always “energy” running through these cells so that they can talk to each other and other body parts. This “energy” allows the body to do many things such as walk, talk and think.

When a seizure happens there is an over excitement of the cells and their energy. It occurs suddenly and there is a change or a loss of consciousness. It often causes uncontrollable behavior, movements or muscle activity. Once a seizure starts there is nothing you can do to stop it. There is no pain with the seizure. Seizures vary in how they look.

Some babies may stop breathing for short periods. Others may rhythmically jerk their arms and/or legs. Some may have unusual eye movements.

Sometimes children turn blue around the mouth or in the face during a seizure. Their breathing may change because of the seizure. Breathing rarely stops completely. The seizure usually does not last very long. If the child remains blue after the seizure, check to make sure the child is breathing. If they are breathing, even shallowly, they are OK.

## Causes:

Seizures happen for many reasons. Seizures may happen because of an infection, head injury, fever, heredity or possibly because of a problem in the brain. Why the seizures happen is important. The seizures may be called idiopathic (The doctor can not find a cause) or symptomatic (there is an underlying cause, such as fever or head injury). It is important for the doctor to try and find a reason for the seizures so that they can treat the seizures correctly. Anything that results in a sudden lack of oxygen to the brain can cause a seizure.

## Treatment and Medication:

Treatment of seizures depends on your doctor and the type of seizure your child has. Many patients are treated with medicine called anticonvulsants. Your doctor chooses a medicine based on your child’s seizure type, age, weight and physical condition. Medicine needs to be given to stop the seizure. Continual seizures may result in brain damage.

It is important that the child take the medicine every day, the same way your doctor or nurse has instructed you. Make sure that you know the name of the medication, the amount, and the times it is given. If your child is old enough, they should know this information.

The medication should **NEVER** be stopped or changed without talking to your doctor or nurse first---even if your child has not had a seizure in a long time.