

WHAT SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SEIZURE DISORDERS

General Information A seizure disorder, also known as Epilepsy, is a disorder of the central nervous system characterized by a tendency to have repeated seizures. The term “seizure” refers to a sudden, uncontrolled episode of abnormal behavior in the brain. A seizure is a symptom of a disorder just as a fever is a symptom of an infection. Seizure disorders are not contagious nor a sign of mental illness. They commonly occur in the morning or late evening, especially if the child is tired or run down. Only in rare cases do seizures require emergency intervention. Most seizures are over in a few minutes and do not need medical follow-up.

Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizures are also known as **grand mal seizures**. They are characterized by *loss of consciousness followed by stiffening and jerking*. These seizures may vary in length but should not exceed 5 minutes. After the seizure, a period of sleep occurs.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS FOR TONIC-CLONIC SEIZURES

There is no way to predict when a generalized seizure may occur.

You may observe:

- Loss of consciousness
- Body stiffness followed by jerky movements
- Loss of bladder control

FIRST –AID FOR TONIC-CLONIC SEIZURES

- DO keep calm
- DO protect from injury
- DO remain in attendance until fully alert
- DO turn on side as soon as possible to maintain airway
- DO observe and time seizures
- DO NOT force anything into the mouth
- DO NOT restrain movement
- DO NOT offer food or drink until fully alert
- 1. Ease person to the ground and put something soft under the head.
- 2. Follow DO's and DO NOT's above.
- 3. If the seizure is *prolonged* or *one seizure follows another*, call 911 and parent *as outlined the student's health plan. (If the student does not have a current health plan for the treatment of seizures while at school, 911 should be called immediately.)*
- 4. Always call 911 if student has difficulty breathing or stops breathing.

Simple Partial also known as focal seizures involve only one part of the brain. The student may know when it is occurring because there is *no loss of consciousness*. Some symptoms include *hand or mouth movement. Head or eyes turned to the side, pins and needles sensation, feeling of numbness or hearing noises.*

Complex Partial also known as psychomotor seizures involve only one part of the brain. The student may be aware, or have a *distorted consciousness*. Symptoms are *unique from person to person* and are often mistaken as *behavioral problems*.

Absence Seizures also known as **petite-mal seizures** are brief and *last only a few seconds*. This is the most common type of seizure in children and may occur frequently throughout the day. If frequent, they can severely affect learning. They are often mistaken for *daydreaming and may include staring spells, eye blinking, and facial twitching*.

Individualized Seizure Plan for School Students who currently have a seizure disorder may need a health plan for school. A blank copy of the School Health Care Plan for Seizure Disorder can be downloaded from the Box Elder School District website and can also be found in the MEDICAL binder kept in the main office at each school. Parents of students with Seizure Disorders should have the School Health Care Plan for Seizure Disorder completed, signed by the physician, and reviewed by the district nurse and school staff *prior* to the student attending school. These plans should be updated every year and/or as the condition of the student changes.