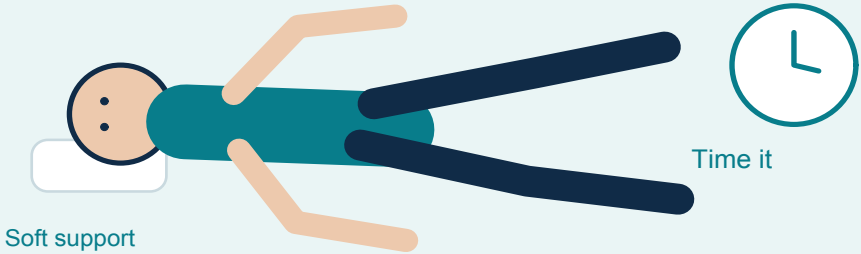
Seizures

Helping during an epileptic seizure

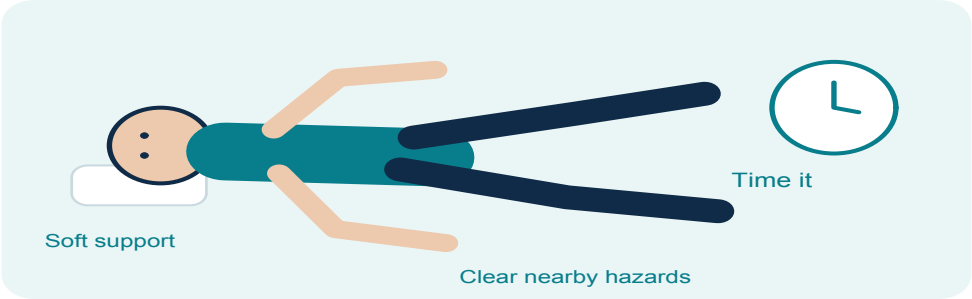


Call 112 if any of these apply

It is their first seizure; it lasts 5 minutes or more or longer than usual; another starts before recovery; or there is serious injury or difficulty breathing.

Time the seizure from the start. A seizure does not always mean the person has epilepsy.

Protect, time and stay



Clear the area, cushion the head and time the seizure.

During shaking or convulsions

Move nearby hazards away. Move the person only if they are in immediate danger. Put something soft under the head and loosen tight clothing at the neck.

Note the start time. Stay calm and stay with them.

Avoid harm

Do not hold them down or try to stop the movements. Do not put fingers, spoons or any object in their mouth.

Do not give food, drink or tablets while they are not fully alert.

A personal emergency plan

If a written plan is available, follow it. Give prescribed rescue medicine only if you have been trained to do so.

After the movements stop

Check breathing

If breathing is normal but they remain drowsy or unresponsive, place them on their side and keep watching.

If breathing is absent or abnormal, call 112 and begin CPR. Gasping is not normal breathing.

Offer calm support

Explain what happened once they are alert. Let them recover quietly; do not leave them alone while confused.

A familiar, brief seizure in someone with epilepsy may not need an ambulance if their plan says so and recovery is complete. Use 112 if unsure about breathing or recovery.

Record what you saw

Write down the duration, body movements, injuries and recovery time. Share this with the person and their clinician.

Start / finish / recovery times

Description and possible trigger

Usual seizure plan / rescue medicine

Your clinic and care plan

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Mon-Fri 09:00-12:00 & 16:00-20:00
Saturday / public holidays 09:00-14:00
Sundays closed, including public holidays.

For emergencies, call 112. Do not wait for an email or clinic reply.

Treating clinician / review

Where my seizure plan is kept

Guidance and further reading

NHS: What to do if someone has a seizure

Epilepsy Action: First aid when someone has a seizure

Resuscitation Council UK: Adult basic life support 2025

Approved for publication 30 October 2026. Original illustrations; general information, not an individual diagnosis. Follow advice from your treating team.