



Documenting a seizure – before, during and after

Accurate recording of seizure descriptions by witnesses is an important part of managing a person's epilepsy. There are no definitive diagnostic tests for epilepsy or for determining a particular seizure type. Therefore, doctors rely on accurate accounts and recording of frequency and severity of seizures, to:

- make a diagnosis
- guide treatment
- determine potential triggers
- & differentiate different seizure types or new seizure presentations.

Records should be kept in the form of written descriptions noted in a diary or log format (See page 2). Information should include what happened before, during and after the event and should be recorded in a step-by-step fashion, exactly as the event unfolded. In some instances, families may also be asked to record video events if safe to do so. Note: do not use video recording if permission from person with epilepsy/decision maker has not been granted. Written information & videos can be shared & discussed with treating physicians, as well as ambulance officers, during emergencies.

Examples of written information include:

Before

- What the person doing leading up to the event?
- What alerted you to the seizure?
- Were there any unusual behaviours? For how long?

- Did the person describe any unusual feelings, smells, tastes, sensations, etc. before the event?

During

- What time did the seizure begin?
- How long did the seizure go for?
- Consciousness: aware, impaired awareness, unconscious?
- Body movements: stiffening, jerking, twitching? Side of the body (left, right or both)?
- Eyes: open, shut, rolled back?
- Emotions: crying, laughing?
- Speech: responsive, unresponsive, repeating words?
- Breathing: shallow, no breathing, appeared pale or blue?
- Incontinence: bowel or bladder?

After

- Was the person: drowsy, unresponsive or confused? How long?
- Did the person:
 - have difficulty breathing, speaking, walking, moving?
 - sleep afterwards? How long?
 - return to activity straight afterwards?
 - show any cognitive, behavioural or emotional changes?
 - have any memory of the event?
- What actions taken: first aid applied, ambulance called, carer notified.

Date and time	Duration of seizure	What happened before?	What happened during?	What happened after?	Actions	Signature