



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Fit, faint or funny turn?

Information for people who
may have had a first seizure



During their lifetime, many people will have a single seizure. Having one seizure does not mean you have epilepsy. Epilepsy can involve having repeated seizures.

Seizures can sometimes seem like other events, such as a fainting episode. It is important that you see a Neurologist to try to find out whether you have had an actual seizure.

You will have an appointment in the Neurology Department in the West Wing of the John Radcliffe Hospital. The doctor who saw you in the Emergency Department will make the referral for this. If you have not received this follow-up appointment within 4 weeks, please contact the Oxford University Hospitals Epilepsy Specialist Nurses (see the end of the leaflet for contact details).

It would be very helpful if the doctor in Neurology could talk to someone who saw what happened when you had the suspected seizure. If you can, bring this person with you. If this is not possible, the doctor may be able to speak with them over the phone during the appointment, or they could write down what happened and you could bring this information with you. This can help the doctor reach a diagnosis.

Important information

After experiencing a suspected seizure, there is certain information you should be aware of.

Driving

You must stop driving. **This is a legal requirement.**

When you are seen in the Neurology Department you will be told whether or not you can return to driving.

Even if you have had just one seizure, you must inform the DVLA, who will tell when you will be able to drive again.

Safety

If you have had any recent loss of awareness, for your personal safety you should:

- take showers rather than baths, whenever possible. If only a bath is available, keep the water shallow and make sure that someone is immediately available to help you, if needed.
- not lock your bathroom door; use an engaged sign instead
- not go swimming on your own or in open water
- avoid unguarded heights, such as ladders or stairs without rails
- step back from the edge of railway platforms, the edges of pavements, etc. and be cautious around open fires, unguarded machinery or power tools.

What do to if you have another seizure

It is important that your family or friends know what to do if you have another seizure. You may like to share the following information with them.

- **DO** move items which may cause injury to the person, e.g. furniture.
- **DO** cushion their head.
- **DO** help them to breathe by turning their head to one side. Turn the person onto their side once the shaking has stopped.
- **DO** stay with the person until they are fully recovered.
- **DON'T** try to restrain the person.
- **DON'T** put anything in their mouth.
- **DON'T** try to move them unless they are in danger.
- **DON'T** give them anything to drink until they are fully recovered.

Most seizures stop by themselves. However, if the shaking part of a seizure goes on for longer than 5 minutes, or if the person is injured as a result of the seizure, call an ambulance by dialing 999.

There are other sorts of seizures, in which you may appear to be in a trance. If you have a seizure like this, someone should guide you away from danger and stay with you until you have recovered.

If you have fully recovered and no injury has occurred you should not need to go to the Emergency Department again. Please contact the Epilepsy Specialist Nurses and tell them what has happened (see contact numbers at the end of the leaflet).

If safe and possible to do so, a video of what happens during the suspected seizure can often prove useful when you are seen in the Neurology Department. We can look at videos on mobile phones, cameras, etc.

How to contact us

Epilepsy Specialist Nurses

Tel: **01865 234 222**

(during office hours)

If we can't take your call, please leave your name, telephone number and a short message. We will call you back as soon as we can, although this may not be the same day.

Alternatively, you can 'bleep' the Epilepsy Specialist Nurses via the hospital switchboard.

Tel: **0300 304 7777**

Useful information

DVLA

Telephone: **0300 790 6806**

Website: www.gov.uk

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

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