



## Epilepsy Toronto

Epilepsy Toronto is dedicated to the promotion of independence and optimal quality of life for all people with epilepsy and their families.

### We offer:

- Information & Education
- Counselling & Support Groups
- Employment Services
- Community Outreach & Advocacy

## Epilepsy Toronto

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# Talking About



# Epilepsy



[www.epilepsytoronto.org](http://www.epilepsytoronto.org)

## Epilepsy Fast Facts

1. Epilepsy is a medical condition that causes one to have seizures
2. Seizures can take many different forms ranging from blank stares to convulsions
3. Epilepsy can affect anyone at any age
4. Epilepsy is NOT contagious
5. Being supportive and understanding of people with epilepsy can help make a difference in their lives



## What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a neurological condition involving recurrent seizures.

A seizure is a change in sensation, awareness, or behavior brought about by a brief electrical disturbance in the brain.

A person is diagnosed with epilepsy after they have had two or more seizures.

### Epilepsy affects 1 in 100 people.

People of all ethnic backgrounds are affected by epilepsy.

Epilepsy occurs most often in children and seniors, but can occur at any stage in a person's life.



## FIRST AID FOR SEIZURES

### Convulsive seizures

May include:

- loss of consciousness
- stiffening of body, jerking of muscles
- shallow breathing
- loss of bowel or bladder control

Usually last 1-3 minutes. Afterward, the person may be confused or disoriented.

### How you can help:

- 1. Stay calm.** Let the seizure take its course, and do not restrain the person.
- 2. Time the seizure.**
- 3. Protect the person from injury.** If necessary, ease them to the floor. Move objects out of their way. Place something soft under their head.
- 4. Loosen anything tight around their neck.**
- 5. Do NOT put anything in their mouth.** The person will not swallow their tongue (although they may bite it).
- 6. Gently roll the person onto their side to allow them to breathe more easily.**
- 7. After the seizure ends, the person may need rest.** They may be feeling confused. Stay with them until they become reoriented.



### Non-convulsive seizures

May include:

- loss of awareness, blank staring
- repetitive movements, lip smacking
- random walking and disorientation

Usually last 1-3 minutes. Afterward, the person may be confused.

### How you can help:

- 1. Stay with the person.** Do not try to stop the seizure, but let it take its course. The person will be unaware of his or her actions, and may not hear you.
- 2. Move dangerous objects out of the way.**
- 3. Do not restrain the person.**
- 4. Gently guide them away from danger** or block access to hazards.
- 5. After the seizure, gently reassure the person, who may be confused.** Stay with them until complete awareness returns.



### When to call 911

- If a convulsive seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
- If consciousness or regular breathing does not return after seizure has ended
- If seizures repeat without full recovery in between
- If it is a first time seizure, or the person is injured, pregnant or has diabetes
- If the seizure occurs in water