

## **Advice Sheet for First Suspected Seizure**

### **What is a seizure?**

A seizure is a disturbance of electrical activity in the brain that causes messages to become mixed up. There are different sorts of seizures (sometimes called “fits” or “convulsions”). Often the person becomes unconscious and is not able to respond to you. They may fall and there can be jerking of the limbs. However there are also minor seizures where the person does not lose consciousness and present as jerks or an odd sensation.

### **Is it Epilepsy?**

A single seizure does not mean you have epilepsy – this may be the only seizure that you ever have. Also not all blackouts referred to the neurology team are definite seizures

### **What should a relative/friend do if you have a major seizure (unconscious and jerking)?**

#### **Do:**

- . Assess the situation
- . Note the time, how long did it last and what they are doing
- . Move objects that may cause injury rather than move the person
- . Put something soft under the head
- . Turn on side as soon as possible
- . Stay with them and unless advised otherwise after diagnosis, ring for an ambulance

#### **Do Not:**

- . Panic
- . Move them unless in danger
- . Restrict movements
- . Place anything in the mouth
- . Give anything by mouth until fully recovered

## **Management**

It is important to let the person take part in all their normal activities. However, you need to take extra care when thinking about bathing, swimming, cycling and cooking etc that could lead to injury if you were to have a further seizure. Stress, alcohol and lack of sleep are particular triggers so need to be managed.

**However you will have to stop driving. Once seen in the neurology clinic they can advise you as to how long this restriction will last but it can be up to a year.**

A&E will arrange an appointment for you to be seen in the neurology dept by Sue Higgins the Epilepsy Specialist Nurse and usually a Consultant too in about 4 weeks. Please ensure you get a witness account or they can come with you/can be contacted as this information, if available, is vital. Also please bring details of your medical history and any medication you take. Any specific investigations will be set up after you have been seen as not all blackouts are true seizures if you have concerns in the interim please ask your GP.

Useful telephone numbers and web sites:

NHS Direct: 0845 608 4455 [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

Epilepsy Action: [www.epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk)

NSE: [www.epilepsynse.org.uk](http://www.epilepsynse.org.uk)

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