

Students with Seizure Disorders

Seizure disorders are actually a common neurological problem, although the various types of seizure disorders make establishing a universal definition difficult. Generally, a seizure may be defined as an episode of abnormal motor, sensory, autonomic, or psychic activity caused by excessive electrical discharges from nerve cells in the brain. Seizures can vary in duration and aftereffects, and can have a significant effect on many aspects of daily living. One result of a seizure, severe headaches, which are sometimes accompanied by memory deficits and clouded thinking, may cause a student to miss class or have difficulty completing an assignment.

A student who informs you that he or she has a seizure disorder and who requests classroom accommodations should provide you with formal notification from the Office of Accessibility.

What Might Happen When a Seizure Occurs?

A student who experiences seizures may be able to tell when a seizure is about to occur. When this happens, the student should lie down in a safe place away from furniture. The student should tell someone that he or she is about to have a seizure and someone should stay with the student. The student may experience some or all of the following:

- A brief black-out period of confused behavior or staring
- A sudden limpness causing a fall
- A loss of consciousness
- Twitching or jerking of part or all of the body (can be minor twitching or major movement)
- Vomiting
- A loss of bowel or bladder control
- Drooling or bleeding (from biting the tongue) from the mouth
- A change in skin appearance (flushed, pale, or blue)
- Eyes rolling back
- Difficulty breathing

★ What If a Student Has a Seizure in My Class? ★

- **Contact Campus Police** at 803/323-3333. **If you are not sure whether an ambulance is needed, still call Campus Police.** Explain that the student has a seizure disorder, describe the urgency, and ask Campus Police to contact 911. Provide your building and classroom location (*e.g., Kinard, first floor, room 115*). Campus Police will call 911 and direct them to your building.

In the classroom, do the following to assist the student:

- Roll the student on his or her side to prevent choking
- Place something soft under the student's head
- Do NOT try to hold the student down or stop the student's movement
- Clear the area of anything that might get in the way, like furniture, to help prevent injuries
- Crowd control - Have someone move others away from the incident/provide screening for the individual for the respect and privacy of the one having a seizure.
- Loosen any tight fitting clothing
- Observe how long the seizure lasts; if possible, by noting the exact time from beginning to end. (A timer or timer app works great.)
- Observe how the student acts after the seizure (weak, confused, etc.)
- Stay with the student until help arrives or the seizure stops and the student returns to normal behavior. Following a seizure, the student may be drowsy or confused.

For questions about seizure disorders or accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility (OA) at 803-323-3290