



Purpose of this teaching document:

The goal is to provide basic information in order to increase families' comfort and understanding of seizures. This document was developed for families on the Canuck Place program whose baby may have a potential risk of seizures as a result of a brain injury/other causes (i.e. infection) and neurology is not actively involved in care management.

What is a seizure?

A seizure is a brief, temporary disturbance of brain activity. Brain cells communicate with each other through tiny bursts of electrical impulses. When these electrical impulses in the brain misfire, a seizure may result.

What does a seizure look like?

Seizures in babies can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from normal baby behavior. Look for colour changes (i.e. red, white, blue) in your child or excessive rhythmic flexion/extension of limbs (some have described this as if their baby is trying to ride a bike), abnormal/rapid eye movements.

What should I do if I think my baby is having a seizure?

Take a deep breath and try to remain calm.

You do not need to stop a seizure once it has started. Most stop on their own. Your role is to stay with your baby, keep your baby safe (see below for strategies) and to be a comfort to your baby.

If your phone is available, film the seizure or use it to keep track of time. *See below for seizure first aid strategies to help support your baby.*

Seizure First Aid

Do not restrict movement: you and your baby may be injured if you try to restrict movement. When the seizure is over, allow your baby to rest. When he/she feels able, your baby can go back to a comfortable level of activity.

Do not put anything in your baby's mouth: it is physically impossible to swallow your tongue, but your baby may choke if things are placed in his or her mouth.

Keep your baby physically safe: remove any sharp or heavy objects that are nearby and make sure they are not around any dangers. Often he or she will be most comfortable and safest lying on his or her side, in the drainage position. This will help keep the airway clear by allowing any mucous/saliva drain out of the side of your baby's mouth.

Talk to your baby: your baby may not be aware of what has happened and will need reassurance that he or she is safe. Stay with your baby. Your



comforting voice will help create a feeling of safety. Talk in a slow, low voice to calm yourself and your baby.

Make your baby comfortable: when your baby is physically safe, you can make your baby comfortable. Wait until your baby is relaxed and not having a convulsion, so that you do not get injured before attempting to loosen clothing, provide physical reassurance when appropriate (holding, etc.) or other forms of comfort your baby responds well to.

Time the seizure: Knowing how long your baby has been having a seizure is important for your healthcare team. Some parents have found it helpful to use their phone to video or as a timer. Phones are often nearby and accessible. Others document on a piece of paper as a log.

Observe the seizure: note what your baby looks like during the seizure, what preceded the seizure and how they were following the seizure.

When do I call 9-1-1:

- If you baby is having problems breathing
- if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
- if there is one seizure after another for longer than 15 minutes
- if your baby remains unresponsive or does not regain consciousness soon as the seizure ends.
- If you are unsure whether you should call 9-1-1 or not, please call Canuck Place 604-742-3475

When do I call Canuck Place:

- If you are worried about your baby or want support.
- If this is the first time your baby might be having a seizure
- If your baby has had seizures before and they are changing now in frequency, length or type.
- If you want to discuss with Canuck Place whether to call 9-1-1 for further support

If you have any questions, please call Canuck Place: 604-742-3475

If you have any feedback to help us improve this document, please email

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References

Sunny Hill Health Care Centre for Children. 2007. A Guide to Seizures for Families of Children with Increased Risk for Seizures.

<http://www.cw.bc.ca/library/pdf/pamphlets/SH15.pdf>

BC Children's Hospital. 2006. Seizure Safety and First Aid

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