



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Information Following a First Seizure (Fit)

A seizure occurs when there is an abnormal discharge of electrical activity in the brain. This can cause a person to black out and their limbs may jerk or shake. Sometimes people bite their tongue or may pass urine. They can appear confused when they come round and may feel worn out. In some cases, people suffer from a form of seizure where they appear to go 'vacant' for a period of time.

It is natural to feel frightened by such an experience. A seizure occurring for the first time does not always mean a diagnosis of epilepsy. It is important to undergo further investigations to try and find out the cause of the seizure.

If you have had one seizure, you may never have another, though you may be worried that this might happen again. We cannot predict when or if a seizure may occur, however we do know that certain things may trigger a seizure episode, such as:

- Flashing lights
- Lack of sleep
- Excess alcohol
- Drugs
- Illness

If further seizures occur, you should call an ambulance if:

- The seizure lasts longer than five minutes
- Two or more seizures without the person regaining consciousness between seizures
- The person is injured
- You have any concern that the person needs medical attention

Driving

If you have a driving licence you must stop driving and it is a legal requirement for you to inform the DVLA.

Safety

As there is some risk that you may have another seizure, it makes sense to think about your safety. If you are having a bath, consider having someone with you or just outside the door to check that you are safe. If you want to go swimming take someone with you or tell the pool attendant that you have had a seizure.

Hospital appointment

You will be referred to a specialist to see if the cause of your seizure can be found. When you go to your appointment, if possible, take someone with you who has witnessed your seizure.

In the meantime, if you have another seizure or have any urgent concerns you should contact your GP or the emergency services.

For general information you can call the Epilepsy Specialist Nurse team on 01904 725742 / 721864; please note they cannot give specific advice until you have been seen by a Consultant Neurologist and you have been given a diagnosis.

① If you have further concerns about your condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/when-to-use-111/)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services. PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk. An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats: If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

Date this version published November 2022
Review Date November 2025
Document Reference PIL1465 v2, Information following a first seizure
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