

When watching a seizure, try to note what happens before, during, and after the event. Write down what happened as soon as you can. Include as much information as possible about the following areas:

BEHAVIOR BEFORE THE SEIZURE - what was the person doing at the time of event, change in mood or behavior hours or days before, 'warning' or 'aura' shortly before event.

WHEN EVENT OCCURS - date, time

POSSIBLE TRIGGERS OR FACTORS THAT MAY MAKE EVENT MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR

- Time of day or month
- Menstruation, pregnancy, changes in contraception, or other hormonal treatment
- Missed, late, or changes in medicines
- Irregular sleep patterns, not enough sleep, other sleep problems
- Irregular eating patterns, specific foods
- During or after exercise or hyperventilation (fast breathing)
- Alcohol or other drug use
- Emotional stress, worry, excitement
- Sounds, flashing lights, bright sunlight
- Other illnesses or infections

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE EVENT

- Change in awareness, alertness, confusion
- Ability to talk and understand
- Changes in thinking, remembering, emotions, perceptions
- Sensations - changes in seeing, twitching, eye blinking or rolling, drooling
- Changes in muscle tone - body becomes stiff or limp
- Movements - jerking or twitching movements, unable to move, body turning, falls
- Automatic or repeated movements - lipsmaking, chewing, swallowing, picking at clothes, rubbing hands, tapping feet, dressing or undressing.
- Walking, wandering, running
- Changes in color of skin, sweating, breathing
- Loss of urine or bowel control

PART OF BODY INVOLVED - where symptom started, spread to other areas, side of body (right, left, or both)

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER EVENT

- Response to voice or touch
- Awareness of name, place, time
- Memory for events
- Ability to talk or communicate
- Weakness or numbness
- Changes in mood or how person acts
- Tired, need to sleep

HOW LONG IT LASTED - length of aura, seizure, after-effects or postictal phase, how long before person returns to normal activity.

Adapted with permission from the Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts, 2006.