

SEIZURE MANAGEMENT

Seizures are paroxysmal events associated with abnormal electrical discharges of neurons in the brain. Partial seizures are usually unilateral, involving a localized or focal area of the brain. Generalized seizures involve the entire brain. Appropriate care includes observation of seizure characteristics and protecting the client from injury and complications.

PURPOSE

- To identify and describe seizures.
- To prevent injury and maintain airway.
- To identify and eliminate safety hazards in the environment.
- To describe safety measures.

APPLIES TO

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses
- Therapists
- Other (Identify): _____

EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES

- Padding (pillows).
- Seizure activity record.

PROCEDURE

1. Assess the client's cardiopulmonary status and evaluate the signs and symptoms of seizures. Observe the earliest symptom such as head or eye deviation as well as how the seizure progresses, what form it takes and how long it lasts.
2. Stay with the client during seizure.
3. Do not restrain the client.
4. Push away nearby objects and, if possible, ease the client to the floor.

5. Loosen clothing, if constrictive and provide padding, if possible (pillows on either side).
6. Maintain airway by positioning the client in a side-lying position to promote drainage and prevent aspiration.
7. Do not put anything in the client's mouth. *Padded tongue blades are no longer recommended.*
8. Provide reassurance during the postictal state by reorientation, offering comfort and privacy. Expect most clients to experience a postictal period of decreased mental status that may last from 30 minutes to 24 hours.
9. Check for any injuries sustained during the seizure.
10. Stay with the client until he/she is fully conscious or until the caregiver is available.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

1. Document in the clinical record:
 - a. Description and length of seizure.
 - b. Any precipitating factors.
 - c. Identify any sensation that may be considered an aura.
 - d. If seizure was preceded by an aura, describe what the client states he/she experienced.
 - e. Record any incontinence, vomiting or salivation that occurred during the seizure.
 - f. Any medications given and any interventions performed.
 - g. If the seizures persist, seek medical attention by calling 911.

RELATED PROCEDURES

None.