

Public Service Announcement

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month

Here's What to Do if You See Someone Having a Seizure

Did you know that there are close to 10,000 people in the region living with epilepsy? That's more people have epilepsy than have multiple sclerosis, Parkinsonism, and cerebral palsy *combined!* Very few people talk about – largely because of stigma and fear of discrimination – which means myths and misconceptions continue.

Some people still believe that you should put something into the mouth of someone having a seizure. THAT IS WRONG. DO NOT RESTRAIN ANYONE HAVING A SEIZURE OR PUT ANYTHING INTO THEIR MOUTH.

Here's what you need to do.

1. Stay calm

- Seizures usually end on their own and last from a few seconds to a few minutes.

2. Create a safe space

- Move sharp objects out of the way
- If the person falls, place something soft under their head and roll them on their side as the seizure subsides
- If the person wanders, stay by their side and gently steer them away from danger, but do not restrain them

3. Time it

- Note the time the seizure begins and ends.

4. Provide reassurance

- When the seizure ends, stay with the person until complete awareness returns

Seizures aren't usually a medical emergency, but you should call 911 if:

- You are not sure the person has epilepsy
- The seizure lasts more than 5 minutes
- It repeats without the person recovering fully between seizures
- If the person does not regain consciousness or start breathing after the seizure ends
- If the person is pregnant, has diabetes, appears injured or is in water.

For more information about epilepsy and how you can help raise awareness, visit epilepsyottawa.ca