

When you have had a suspected first fit (seizure)

Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

You came to the Emergency Department after a suspected seizure. You have been assessed and the team are happy that you can be discharged from hospital. We have made arrangements for you to be seen by a specialist.

What is a seizure?

A seizure, also called a 'fit', an 'attack', a 'convulsion' or a 'turn' is a sudden, brief disruption of normal brain activity. The seizure may be different depending on whether the disruption occurs throughout the brain or in just part of the brain.

Anyone could have a single seizure; about 1 in 20 people will have a seizure at some point in their life. This is not the same as having epilepsy.

What happens next?

The Emergency Department will refer you to the 'First Fit Clinic' where you will be seen by an Advanced Epilepsy Nurse Specialist. If you do not hear from them within 4 weeks of coming to the Emergency Department, please call them on **0116 258 4618**. When you attend your outpatient appointment it would be helpful if you could come with someone who saw your seizure or if you could bring a video of the event with you.

When the Advanced Epilepsy Nurse Specialist see you in Outpatients Clinic they will give you more information and answer any questions you have. Until you are seen by a specialist, you should follow the advice in this leaflet.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

For your safety

- **You must not drive or operate dangerous machinery.** You must declare any seizure activity with unconsciousness to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/epilepsy-and-driving> to report your condition.

It is your responsibility to report your condition. You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result.

- **You should avoid any dangerous work or leisure activities** until you have seen the Advanced Epilepsy Nurse Specialist, this includes activities such as swimming, cycling on busy roads or using ladders. Consider situations where having a seizure could have serious consequences such as standing close to the edge of train platforms or roads.
- **Try to avoid having a bath or shower without supervision** or without someone in the house. Make sure the bathroom door is unlocked. It may be safer to take a shower. If you do have a bath make sure that it is only half filled and the taps are turned off.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol and taking illicit drug. Make sure you are not sleep deprived.**
- **You should tell your employer** that you have had a seizure.
- If you have **another fit or seizure you should return** to the Emergency Department.

It is a good idea to tell your family/friends that you have had a seizure and make sure they know what to do in case you have another one.

First aid during a seizure

When a seizure starts, it will often stop on its own after a few minutes. Follow the advice below:

Do:

- Watch the seizure carefully and if possible let it run its natural course.
- Keep calm and note the time the seizure starts and how long it lasts.
- Clear a space around the person. Remove any sharp, hot or hard objects.
- Cushion the persons head with whatever is available like soft cushion, jumper or coat.
- Loosen any tight clothing round the neck and gently remove glasses if worn.
- Turn the person onto their side (the recovery position) once the shaking stops.
- Stay with the person, if possible, until any confusion passes.

Do not:

- Do not move the person while the seizure is happening unless there is an immediate danger. For example, if they are in a busy road, at the top of the stairs, in water, near a fire or hot radiator.
- Do not try to restrain the person.
- Do not attempt to lift the person.
- Do not put anything between the teeth or into the mouth.
- Do not give any medication while the seizure is happening.
- Do not leave the person until they have recovered.

You should call 999 if:

- One seizure follows another without any recovery in between.
- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or the person remains unconscious for a longer time than is usual.
- The seizure is a different type or pattern of seizure to what the person normally has.
- The person has been badly injured.
- The person has difficulty breathing.
- You do not know the persons history.
- You are at all unsure.

What happens next?

If you have any concerns, please contact the Advanced Epilepsy Specialist Nurse on any of these numbers:

- **0116 258 4452**
- **0116 258 4495**
- **0116 258 4699**

When you come to clinic, if possible could you come with someone who witnessed your seizure or **ask them to complete the first fit questionnaire attached.**

It is your responsibility and **a legal requirement** to report your condition to the DVLA if you hold a driving licence.

It is a good idea to avoid the use of a bath without supervision. Showering is safe.

Witness questionnaire: First Fit Clinic questionnaire (page 1)

Emergency Department

Patient Name..... Date of birth:.....

You have been referred to the first Fit clinic at the Leicester General Hospital Neurology outpatient department because you recently had some form of fit/collapse.

It is important that the person who witnessed this event attends your appointment with you. This is because their valuable information will help us put all the pieces together in order to make the right diagnosis.

We understand it is difficult sometimes for someone who saw the event to attend clinic with you therefore, please could you ask them to complete the questionnaire if they cannot attend and bring it with you to your appointment.

We will appreciate it if they could give as much detail as possible.

- Date and time of fit/collapse/ blackout.....
 - What were you doing before you collapsed or what is the last thing you remember doing before you collapsed?
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 - Did you get a warning before you collapsed, if yes, please describe the warning?
.....
 - What was your next memory, for example the next thing you remember when coming around such as on the floor with paramedics?
.....
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Witness questionnaire: First Fit Clinic questionnaire (page 2)

Emergency Department

- Was the episode witnessed? If yes, please ask them to complete the following questions. Please describe what was witnessed (for example, the whole body was stiff rigid and shaking, eyes open, unresponsive, struggled to breathe, colour changed such as pale or bluish).

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- Was there any froth or foam coming out of the mouth?

- Did they bite their tongue if yes which part of the tongue? (Side or tip)

- Did they wet themselves?

- How long did the attack last?

- Were they confused and disorientated after the attack if yes how long for?

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- How long did it take them to fully recover?

- Any similar attack previously or since?

Please describe what happened:

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