

## (3) Parents: First aid for seizures

Witnessing a first seizure can be traumatic and frightening. Once you get to know your child's seizures, you will know what to expect and hopefully become more confident in dealing with them. Most seizures are short, and recovery is usually quick.

### First aid for tonic-clonic seizures:

#### This is what you should do:

- \* Keep calm, note the time the seizure starts and how long it lasts
- \* Maintain the child's airway by wiping vomit and saliva from the child's mouth
- \* Once convulsions have stopped, tilt the head slightly backwards
- \* Clear a space around the child and prevent others from crowding round
- \* Cushion the child's head with something soft
- \* Loosen any tight clothing around the neck and remove any glasses
- \* Turn the child on their side during the seizure if this is possible, if not once the convulsions (jerking) have stopped
- \* Talk quietly and calmly during the recovery period and tell the child what has happened
- \* If the child sleeps after a seizure, let them wake up naturally

#### This is what you should not do:

- \* Do not try to lift or move the child while the seizure is happening unless the child is in danger (for example, the child is on a busy road or at the top of stairs)
- \* Do not try to stop the jerking or restrain the child
- \* Do not put anything in the child's mouth or between their teeth
- \* Do not give any medication while the seizure is happening unless this is emergency medication (for more information, please see our Parent's factsheet 'No. 4 Medical emergencies')

- \* Do not offer anything to eat or drink until the child is fully conscious and recovered

## There is no need to call an ambulance unless:

- \* one seizure follows another without full recovery in between
- \* the convulsive (jerking) part of the seizure lasts for more than five minutes or for longer than is usual for the child
- \* the child has been injured during the seizure, and the injury requires more than first aid
- \* the child may have inhaled food or water
- \* the child is having problems breathing after the seizure has stopped

## First aid for other types of seizure

For all other types of seizures, the first aid guidelines are simple:

- \* Time when the seizure starts
- \* Stay with the child to make sure there is no risk of injury or further seizure activity
- \* Talk gently during a seizure as this may help bring the child out of a seizure

Tell the child what has happened after the seizure and offer reassurance. A child often wants to sleep after a seizure.