

Epilepsy is More Common Than You Think: Coach Kill is one of 60,000 Minnesotans with seizures

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Coach Jerry Kill had a seizure at TCF Bank Stadium on Saturday. The footage of his collapse is alarming and unsettling for the coach, his team, and spectators. But the bottom line is that epilepsy is more common than you think.

Three million Americans and 60,000 Minnesotans live with a seizure disorder, also known as epilepsy. When a person has two or more unprovoked seizures, they have epilepsy. Seizures can happen to anyone at any time.

As evidenced at the Gopher game, seizures can be disruptive in a person's life. Having epilepsy impacts a person's ability to drive, can lead to discrimination in the workplace, and the unknown nature of when a seizure will occur can leave people fearful to travel or partake in everyday activities.

Coach Kill was fortunate to be surrounded by people who knew how to respond to his seizure. There are over twenty different types of seizures, ranging from something as minor-looking as an eye twitch, to the full collapse we saw on Saturday. Most seizures last between 1-2 minutes.

Believe it or not, many people still think holding someone down or putting something in their mouth is an appropriate response to a seizure – it is not. When a seizure happens, stay calm, clear the area of any dangerous objects, reassure the person, and call 911 if the seizure lasts more than five minutes (or is known to be a first seizure). The Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota offers free seizure response trainings and educational resources at www.efmn.org.

We wish Coach Kill the very best and believe that this event can help our community better support people with seizures and help erase the stigma associated with epilepsy.