

# Seniors and Seizures

## Caregiver Information

- Epilepsy, also known as a seizure disorder, is a neurological disorder of the brain characterized by the tendency to have recurring seizures. Seizures are caused by abnormal electrical signals in the brain.
- Epilepsy is likely to develop in later life; 300,000 older adults in the U.S. have epilepsy.

*Most seniors have partial seizures, rather than generalized tonic clonic seizures, which are characterized by a fall, loss of consciousness and convulsions. Read more about the signs to watch for below:*

### Signs of Simple Partial Seizures

- Consciousness is not impaired
- Involuntary movements (isolated twitching of arms, face, legs)
- Sensory symptoms (tingling, weakness, sounds, smells, tastes, visual distortions)
- Psychic symptoms (déjà vu, hallucinations, fear, anxiety, “a feeling they can’t explain”)
- Duration usually less than 1 minute



### Signs of Complex Partial Seizures

- Altered awareness
- Picking things up
- Nonsensical speech or lip smacking
- Automatisms (picking at clothing/chewing)
- Clumsy or disoriented movements
- Blank stare/dazed look
- Aimless walking
- Often lasts 1 to 3 minutes

**PLEASE SEE BACKSIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### Causes of seizures in older adults:

- Stroke
- Brain tumor
- Brain surgery
- Chronic alcoholism
- Infections
- Cardiovascular disease
- Head trauma
- Toxic/metabolic disturbances
- Alzheimer's/dementia



### Pay Attention to Get the Right Medical Attention:

Frequently, partial seizures experienced by older adults are misinterpreted as the effects of aging or as dementia and remain undiagnosed.

If you think an older adult is having seizures, encourage them to schedule an appointment with their doctor.