First aid for tonic-clonic seizures

Tonic-clonic seizures used to be called ‘grand mal’. The person goes stiff, loses consciousness, falls to the floor and begins to jerk or convulse. They may look a little blue around their mouth from irregular breathing. Tonic-clonic seizures can last a few minutes.

**Remember ACTION for tonic-clonic seizures:**

**Assess**
Assess the situation – are they in danger of injuring themselves? Remove any nearby objects that could cause injury

**Cushion**
Cushion their head (with a jumper, for example) to protect them from head injury

**Time**
Check the time – if the seizure lasts longer than five minutes you should call an ambulance

**Identity**
Look for a medical bracelet or ID card – it may give you information about the person’s seizures and what to do

**Over**
Once the seizure is over, put them on their side (in the recovery position – see illustration). Stay with them and reassure them as they come round

**Never**
Never restrain the person, put something in their mouth or try to give them food or drink

**Call an ambulance if:**
- You know it is a person’s first seizure
- The seizure lasts for more than five minutes
- One seizure appears to follow another without the person gaining consciousness in between
- The person is injured
- You believe the person needs urgent medical attention

Tonic-clonic seizures are not the only kind of epileptic seizure. There are more than 40 different kinds of seizures. To find out more, visit [www.epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk) or call the Epilepsy Helpline on freephone 0808 800 5050.

This poster has been produced as part of the Take epilepsy action campaign. The campaign is designed to raise awareness of epilepsy and help you remember what to do if you see someone having a seizure. To find out more about Take epilepsy action, or to order more posters, visit [www.epilepsy.org.uk/action](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk/action) or call 0113 210 8800.

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