



EpilepsyTERMS

TERM	DEFINITION	WHY IT MATTERS
Seizure	A sudden burst of abnormal electrical activity in the brain.	Seizures can affect movement, awareness, breathing, behaviour, emotions, or recovery afterward.
Epilepsy	A condition where a person has a tendency to have recurring seizures.	Epilepsy is not one single thing. It can look very different from person to person.
Seizure threshold	How likely the brain is to have a seizure.	Fever, missed sleep, illness, missed medication, or stress can sometimes lower seizure threshold.
Trigger	Something that may make seizures more likely for a specific person.	Triggers are different for everyone. Tracking patterns can help guide care.
Aura	A symptom that can happen at the beginning of a focal seizure.	An aura can feel like a warning, but medically it may be part of the seizure itself.
Postictal	The recovery period after a seizure.	A person may be sleepy, confused, emotional, weak, nauseated, or not back to baseline yet.
Baseline	What is normal for that person when they are well.	For medically complex children, baseline may look different from other children.

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Seizure cluster	Two or more seizures close together, depending on the person's usual pattern and care plan.	Some people have rescue medication for clusters.
Status epilepticus	A seizure emergency where a seizure lasts too long or seizures repeat without recovery.	This needs urgent treatment.
Tonic	Rhythmic jerking movements.	This is often what people notice during convulsive seizures.
Clonic	Something that may make seizures more likely for a specific person.	Triggers are different for everyone. Tracking patterns can help guide care.
Myoclonic	Sudden, brief jerks.	These may look like quick jolts or startles.
Atonic	Sudden loss of muscle tone.	This can cause sudden drops or collapse.
Automatisms	Repetitive movements during a seizure, such as lip smacking, chewing, picking, swallowing, or rubbing hands.	Automatisms can make a seizure look like behaviour or confusion.
Eye deviation	Eyes turning or pulling to one side during a seizure.	This can be an important focal seizure clue.

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Eye fluttering	Rapid blinking or fluttering of the eyelids.	This may happen with absence seizures or other seizure types.
Behavioral Arrest	A sudden pause where the person stops what they are doing.	This can look like freezing, staring, or “checking out.”
Speech Arrest	A sudden inability to speak during a seizure.	This can be an important focal seizure clue.
Impaired Awareness	Awareness is changed or reduced during a seizure.	The person may seem awake but not respond normally or remember what happened.
Apnea	A pause in breathing.	Apnea during or after a seizure should be taken seriously.
Oxygen desaturation	A drop in oxygen level.	Severe or prolonged oxygen drops should be discussed with the medical team.
Cyanosis	Blue, gray, or dusky colour, often around the lips or face.	This can be a sign oxygen is low.
Tachycardia	A heart rate that becomes faster than expected.	Heart rate may rise during stress or seizures.
Bradycardia	A heart rate that becomes slower than expected.	A heart rate drop during or after a seizure should be discussed with the care team.

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