

# Employer toolkit

Supporting employees with epilepsy in the workplace

## Absence seizures – With references

### Signs and symptoms

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- Absence seizures are usually brief and can sometimes be mistaken for daydreaming
- A typical absence seizure will usually last less than 10 seconds
- Absence seizures can happen in clusters. If not controlled by treatment, some people can have hundreds of absence seizures in a day
- They are more common when someone is falling asleep or waking up
- In the past they were called petit-mal seizures

### What happens

During an absence seizure the person will not know what is happening around them and can't be brought out of it.

The person might look like they are daydreaming or 'switching off' briefly, which can make it difficult to notice this type of seizure.

Things you might see include:

- Eyelids fluttering or staring blankly into space
- Slight jerking movements of the body or limbs
- In longer absences, brief repeated actions
- Stopping what they are doing

## What happens afterwards

After an absence seizure, people are normally able to go straight back to what they were doing. If they have had a cluster of several absence seizures the person might feel confused.

## How to help

For how to help someone who is having an absence seizure, go to the first aid for seizures information.

[Absence seizure first aid](#)

## References

There are no references for this information.

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[\*\*employers.epilepsy.org.uk\*\*](https://employers.epilepsy.org.uk)

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