

# Employer toolkit

Supporting employees with epilepsy in the workplace

## Tonic seizure first aid – With references

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[Watch a video of how to help](#)

[How to help](#)

[When to call an ambulance](#)

Tonic seizures are more likely to happen when a person is asleep.

During a tonic seizure, a person's muscles will stiffen. This can happen on one side or both sides of the body, depending on the part of the brain affected. If they are not already lying down, they might fall down.

Their lips might turn blue and appear to stop breathing. This is because their chest muscles stiffen.

Tonic seizures are short usually lasting less than 60 seconds. Some people tend to have clusters of tonic seizures, where they have several seizures in a short space of time.

The person's neck will extend, their eyes open wide and roll upwards. Their arms may raise upwards and the legs might stretch or contract.

### Tonic seizure

Watch this short video of a tonic seizure and how to help.

[Watch the video](#)

## How to help

### Do:

- Protect the person from injury (remove any harmful objects from nearby)
- Time the seizure
- Stay with them until recovery is complete
- Be calmly reassuring

### Don't:

- Don't put anything in their mouth
- Don't try to move them, unless they are in danger
- Don't give them anything to eat or drink until they are fully recovered
- Don't try to bring them round

People usually recover fast from tonic seizures. Some people might feel groggy for a few minutes. This is more likely if they've had a cluster of seizures.

If a tonic seizure stops by itself and the person isn't injured, they will not usually require medical attention.



**Call for an ambulance if any of these things apply:**

- A seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
- One seizure follows another without them recovering in between
- They are badly injured during the seizure

[More info about tonic seizures](#)

## 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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