

# Drug or Alcohol Provoked Seizure Information

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## What is a seizure?

Electrical activity in the brain happens all the time. This is normal. A seizure happens when there is a sudden intense burst of electrical activity. This causes a short lived disruption to the way the brain normally works. During a seizure the messages the brain sends to the body become mixed up and the body behaves in an abnormal or unusual way. The way the body reacts during a seizure depends on which part of the brain is affected.

## Why did I have a seizure?

We think your was caused by your either taking drugs or drinking too much alcohol. Having a seizure does not always mean you will go on to get epilepsy, especially if the seizure was caused by alcohol or drug use. However, using drugs or drinking too much alcohol makes it possible you will go onto have more seizures in the future. If a person is going to have another seizure, it is more likely to happen in the six months after the first seizure.

## What do I do if I have another seizure?

You should tell your close friends and family that you have had a seizure. If you have another seizure they can keep you safe by:

- Keeping calm
- Guiding you to a safe place if you are walking around
- Protecting you from harm by moving things that could hurt you
- Cushioning your head if you are on the ground
- Never putting anything in your mouth during a seizure
- Putting you on your side once the seizure has stopped if you have lost consciousness
- Explaining anything the person has missed
- Staying with you until you are back to your usual self

It is normal to feel very tired or slightly confused and disorientated following a seizure.

## Your family and friends should call 999 if:

- Your seizure movements continue for five minutes or more
- You have another seizure without fully recovering from the first one
- You have an injury that needs urgent medical attention

## Driving following a drug or alcohol provoked seizure

Because you have had a seizure you must **stop driving**. Please inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) on telephone number 0300 790 6806 and contact your car insurance company. If you have had only one seizure you may be allowed to drive when:

- You have not had a seizure for six months
- Your doctor and the DVLA think it is unlikely that you will have another seizure
- The DVLA will stop you from driving indefinitely until your doctor and the DVLA are sure that your drug or alcohol use has stopped and not likely to start again

**How does having a drug or alcohol provoked seizure affect me?**

Having a seizure that has been caused by drugs or alcohol can be very dangerous. There is a risk of death as a result of alcohol or drug misuse and this risk can be higher if you have had seizures.

There are things that you should consider especially in the first six months after the seizure.

- Take a shower instead of a bath and leave the door unlocked
- Do not swim alone and tell the lifeguard that you have had a seizure in the past 6 months
- Always wear a cycle helmet if going out cycling
- Do not climb heights
- Take extra care doing household chores such as cooking and ironing to prevent burn injuries
- Let your employer know that you have had a seizure. Working at heights or operating some machinery can be dangerous

**What Happens Now?**

Getting the right help and support to reduce your drug and alcohol use in a controlled way is important.

We would strongly advise that you seek professional help regarding your alcohol/drug use. It is very important to have support when cutting down on alcohol and drug use because stopping too quickly can also lead to seizures. There is a specialist clinic for people who have experienced seizures through drug or alcohol use. Staff in this clinic are experts in helping people with drug and alcohol use problems who have had seizures. This is the best team to help you after this seizure.

Trying to stop using drugs or alcohol is very difficult and most people need help from health care professionals to do this. This can include psychological support and treatment plans to help you get off drugs or alcohol. You can be referred for this help if required after you have been seen in the clinic.