

# Seizure Disorders

## Frequently Asked Questions regarding Students with Seizure Disorders

### What is a Seizure Disorder?

A seizure disorder is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which the nerve cell activity in the brain is disturbed. Seizures can last from a few seconds to a few minutes. Seizure disorders are generally controlled by medication. Symptoms of a seizure can vary and may include:

- temporary confusion
- unresponsiveness and staring
- strange smell, sound, feeling, taste or visual images
- sudden tiredness or dizziness
- stiffening of the body
- breathing problems
- uncontrollable jerking movements of the arms and legs
- loss of consciousness

### How will I know if a student in my class has a seizure disorder?

It is the student's responsibility to disclose this information to the ADA Services office (ASO). The ASO then engages in an interactive process and meets with students on an individualized, case-by-case basis to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations. In collaboration with the student, the ASO will generate an accommodation letter which will be emailed to the faculty member indicating the student has a documented seizure disorder as well as any approved accommodations.

### What effects could a seizure disorder have on a student's learning?

Seizure disorders impact everyone differently. Depending on the nature and severity of the disorder, side effects of a seizure may include fatigue, difficulty talking, memory and information processing problems. Anti-seizure medication may also cause side effects including drowsiness, inattention or restlessness.

### What academic accommodations are appropriate for a student with a seizure disorder?

In general, accommodations for a student with a seizure disorder may include but are not limited to:

- Extended time to complete exams (due to side effects of medications)
- A reduced distraction environment to complete exams
- Extended time to complete an assignment and/or exam in the event a student experiences a seizure during the semester
- Notetaking assistance

## What do I do if a student has a seizure during class?

Faculty are always encouraged to call 911 in the event a student has a seizure in class. Emergency medical personnel are trained to respond and can determine whether or not the student requires transport to a medical facility.

### After calling 911:

- Keep calm, let the seizure take its course and do not try to stop it.
- If possible, keep the student from falling and/or try to guide the student gently to the floor.
- If possible, put something soft under the student's head.
- Roll the student on his/her side as soon as possible – this allows for saliva or other fluids to drain away helping to keep the airway clear.
- Protect the student from further injury if possible – move away any desks, chairs or other objects
- Instruct the other students to move to the hallway.
- **Do not** force anything in the student's mouth – this may cause injuries including chipped teeth or a fractured jaw.
- **Do not** administer food or beverage during or immediately after a seizure.
- Try to monitor what the student is doing so that you can describe the seizure to the emergency medical personnel. This may include:
  - What kind of body movement occurred?
  - How long did the seizure last?
  - Are there any injuries from the seizure?

Please feel free to contact Steve Harcus, Director of ADA Services, at (316) 295-5522 or via e-mail at [steven\\_harcus@friends.edu](mailto:steven_harcus@friends.edu) with any additional questions.