



## FACT SHEET

### Living with a Brain Tumour - SEIZURES

Most people with a brain tumour that have seizures will have the seizures because the tumour causes a focal disturbance (irritation of the nerve cells) in one part of the brain. Seizures may simply be a loss of consciousness for a few seconds, or they may involve muscle spasms or abnormal movements for half a minute or more.

#### Types of Seizures

##### **Partial / Focal Seizures**

This is where the disturbance in brain cell function starts at one specific site in the brain (involves one half of the brain). The symptoms reflect the normal function of the part of the brain that is involved, by the seizure. For example, if the seizure arises in the part of the brain that controls movement there will be jerking of the limbs.

##### **Common symptoms**

- Twitching
- Jerking
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Strange smells or tastes

##### ◆ *Simple Partial Seizures:*

- No loss of awareness

##### ◆ *Complex Partial Seizures:*

- Loss of awareness for a short period.

##### **Generalised / Grand mal Seizures**

This is where the disturbance in brain cell function occurs throughout the entire brain (both sides). These cause muscle twitching or jerking and loss of consciousness.

*Most people with a brain tumour and seizures will have partial / focal seizures because the tumour causes focal disturbance in one part of the brain.*

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### Living with a Brain Tumour - SEIZURES

If you are with someone who has a seizure

- Do not try to restrain them or put anything in their mouth, just try to clear anything from around them that may cause them harm. If they are unconscious, lie them on their side.
- Most seizures last two or three minutes.
- **Call an ambulance :-**
  - If the seizure lasts more than five minutes
  - If they have another seizure straight after the first
  - If they injure themselves or are having trouble breathing.

People are often confused and very tired after a seizure. Explain to them what has happened and find a place where they can rest.

How do seizures affect your daily life?

- **Driving:** the law regarding seizures and brain tumours depends on various things. Follow your doctor's advice.
- **Work:** you should not work with dangerous machinery, at heights etc. Let your employer know.
- **Home:** discuss with all family members. Have showers rather than baths.
- **Sport –** do not swim, bicycle ride alone etc. Consult your doctor if you have any worries.

Can seizures be treated?

- Yes. Treatment with tablets or medicines will control seizures in about 50% of people who have brain tumours and seizures.
- About 50% of people will continue to have seizures despite treatment, but the seizure severity and frequency is much less with medication.