

July 2005

Epilepsy

General-Tonic-Clonic (grand mal)

- The tonic part of the seizure is when the person goes stiff.
- The muscles in the lungs contract, forcing air out.
- Breathing may stop for a short while and because the oxygen in the blood then gets used up, the person may go blue (cyanosis).
- They may urinate.
- After only a minute or so, the clonic phase of the seizure begins; this refers to the jerking movements.
- Muscles contract and relax in quick succession.
- During this period the person may bite their tongue or the inside of their cheek.
- After a further minute or so, the body goes limp.

Drop fits

- There is no warning.
- The body goes limp and the child drops.

Absences (petit mal)

- May happen hundreds of times in 24 hours.
- May be difficult to spot.
- Will interfere with concentration and attention.

Medication – common side-effects

- TEGRETOL - rash (typically soon after starting). Other side effects (dizziness, drowsiness, blurred/double vision, headache).
- Clonazepam - drowsiness, mental slowing, dizziness, impaired co-ordination.
- Phenobarbital - drowsiness, mental slowing, aggressiveness, depression. Children may become hyperactive.
- Phenytoin - intoxication (dizziness, loss of co-ordination, mental slowing).
- EPILIM - weight gain, drowsiness, tremor.
- GABITRIL - confusion, depression, psychosis, diarrhoea.

This document is for information purposes only.

For more information about cerebral palsy and Scope's services

Contact Scope's Cerebral Palsy Helpline for information, advice and support. Copies of all Scope's information sheets can be downloaded from the website or obtained from the Helpline. Referrals to Scope's Community Teams and services can be made through the Helpline.

The Helpline hours are:

Monday - Friday 9 am to 9 pm. Weekends 2 pm to 6 pm

Cerebral Palsy Helpline

PO Box 833

Milton Keynes

MK12 5NY

Tel: **0808 800 3333**

Fax: **01908 321051**

Email: cphelpline@scope.org.uk

Scope's website address is www.scope.org.uk

Scope acknowledges the help and support of everyone who has been involved in the production of this information.

This information can be made available in other formats if required, eg. large print or tape. We also have information about Scope and cerebral palsy available in 13 languages on audiotape and can offer a telephone interpreting service to people whose preferred language is not English.

Please contact Scope's Cerebral Palsy Helpline on telephone number 01908 321049 for more details of these services.

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