



SEIZURES IN THE NEWBORN BABY

FACTS ABOUT SEIZURES

1. Normal functioning of the brain happens with controlled electrical activity. When the electrical activity becomes uncontrolled, it is called a seizure. This uncontrolled electrical activity can last a few seconds to a few minutes.
2. Things that your baby may do that could be a sign that your baby is having a seizure include:
 - Jerky movements of one or more of the baby's arms or legs which does not stop when you gently hold the arm or leg that is having jerky movements.
 - Baby's eyes that blink over and over very fast or eyes that shake to the side or roll so only the whites of the eyes show.
 - Stiffening of the arms, legs and/or body.
 - Movements of the baby's legs that make him/her look like he/she is riding a bicycle.
 - Movements of the baby's arms that make he/she look like he/she is throwing a ball.
 - The baby smacks his/her lips over and over or chews or sucks.
 - A change in the baby's skin color to pale or dusky.
 - The baby is staring or looking away.
 - Movements that the baby does over and over again which look out of place or unnatural.
 - The infant may stop breathing (this is uncommon).
3. Things that are not from a seizure include:
 - Jittery movements that last less than a minute, stop when you put your hand on a moving part.
 - Quick jerky movements when your baby is falling asleep or is asleep.
 - Eye movements your baby makes when he/she is asleep.

4. There are many causes for seizures in a baby. Some causes of seizures may be:
 - High fever
 - Bleeding in your baby's brain that happened before your baby was born or during the first days of life.
 - Poor oxygen and blood supply to the brain before your baby was born or during the first days of life.
 - Some babies are born with something wrong with their brain or nervous system that causes them to have seizures.
 - Chemical problems in the blood such as low blood sugar (not common by the time your baby goes home) or other rare problems.
 - Infections in the brain and spinal cord (meningitis).
 - Sometimes a cause cannot be found.

5. Caring for your baby during a seizure:
 - Remain calm. Do not leave your baby alone during a seizure.
 - Do not attempt to restrain your baby as this can lead to injury.
 - Turn your baby on his/her side.
 - Clear your baby's mouth and nose if he/she vomits.
 - Do not put anything in his/her mouth. He/she will not swallow his/her tongue.
 - Loosen any tight clothing especially around your baby's throat and chest to allow uninhibited breathing.
 - Do not offer food or fluids right after the seizure.

6. Caring for your baby after a seizure:
 - Change his/her diaper. They will often stool or wet during the seizure.
 - Do not give extra seizure medicine.
 - Call the doctor. Describe, as best you can, what occurred prior to the seizure, what you observed, approximately duration of the seizure and the infant's activity after.
 - Seizures are not life threatening.

7. Medical diagnosis and treatment of seizures:

- EEG (Electroencephalogram) may be done to record the electrical action in the brain. The Neurologist interprets this test and discusses the results with you.
- Blood tests may be ordered to see if the baby's body chemicals are correct.
- The seizure may be treated with medication. Several medicines are used for treating seizures. Seizure medicine may make your baby sleepy for several hours. Babies may stay on seizure medications for several months to years. The doctor will decide how long to give the medication.