



# Understanding Seizures in Your Pet

A seizure is a temporary, uncontrolled burst of electrical activity in the brain. This electrical "storm" causes involuntary changes in your pet's movement, behavior, or consciousness.

## ? Why Do Seizures Happen? (Causes)

Seizures can be categorized based on the underlying cause:

| Category   | Description   | Common Examples   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Intracranial</b><br>(Inside the Brain)                    | A primary structural problem within the brain itself.   | Brain tumors, stroke, inflammation (encephalitis), head trauma, or malformations (e.g., hydrocephalus).   |
| <b>Extracranial</b><br>(Outside the Brain) / <b>Reactive</b> | A problem in the body that affects the brain's function. The brain itself is structurally normal.   | Severe organ failure (Liver/Kidney disease), dangerously low blood sugar ( <b>Hypoglycemia</b> ), high fever/heatstroke, or ingestion of toxins (e.g., chocolate, certain rat poisons, antifreeze). |
| <b>Idiopathic Epilepsy</b>                                   | The most common cause in dogs. Seizures with no identifiable underlying structural or metabolic cause. Typically diagnosed in dogs between 6 months and 6 years of age. | Often genetic or inherited (e.g., in Beagles, Golden Retrievers, German Shepherds, Border Collies).   |

## What Types of Seizures Can There Be?

Seizures are often preceded by a pre-seizure phase (**pre-ictal** or **aura**), followed by the seizure itself (**ictal**), and then a recovery phase (**post-ictal**).

### 1. Generalized Seizures (Grand Mal)

- **Most Common Type:** Affects the entire brain and body.
- **Signs:** Complete loss of consciousness, falling to the side, stiffening or rhythmic jerking/paddling of all four limbs, excessive drooling, and possible loss of bladder/bowel control.
- **Duration:** Usually lasts from a few seconds up to 3 minutes.

### 2. Focal Seizures (Partial)

- Affects only a specific part of the brain and, therefore, only part of the body.
- **Signs:** Localized twitching (e.g., one side of the face, an ear, or a single limb), "fly-biting" (snapping at imaginary objects), or repetitive chewing motions (known as "chewing gum fits").
- **Consciousness:** The pet may remain conscious or only have an altered level of awareness. Focal seizures can sometimes progress into a generalized seizure.



## How to Monitor a Seizure (During the Event)

Your actions during a seizure are vital for your pet's safety and providing information to your veterinarian. **Stay Calm!**

- **Safety First:** Move furniture or objects away from your pet to prevent injury. If possible, place a pillow or blanket under their head.
- **Do NOT Restrain:** Never try to hold your pet down or put anything in their mouth. They cannot control their jaw and may accidentally bite you.
- **Time It!** This is the **most crucial piece of information**. Use a watch or phone to record the exact start and end time of the seizure.
- **Observe and Record:** Note what the seizure looks like (paddling, twitching, drooling, loss of consciousness).
- **Take a Video (If Safe):** A short video of the event can be incredibly helpful for diagnosis.
- **Post-Seizure Care:** Once the seizure is over, keep the environment quiet and calm. Your pet may be confused, wobbly, blind, or anxious for a few minutes up to 24 hours (the post-ictal phase). Comfort them gently.



## When a Seizure Becomes an Emergency

Seek immediate veterinary attention (call or go to the emergency clinic right away) if your pet experiences any of the following:

| Emergency Condition       | Definition  | Why It's Dangerous  |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Status Epilepticus</b> | A single seizure lasting <b>more than 5 minutes</b> .   | Can lead to dangerous body temperatures, oxygen deprivation, and permanent brain damage.                  |
| <b>Cluster Seizures</b>   | Two or more seizures occurring within a <b>24-hour period</b> , with the pet NOT fully recovering consciousness between episodes. | Indicates a severe, poorly controlled underlying issue.   |
| <b>First-Time Seizure</b> | Your pet has <b>never had a seizure before</b> .  | Requires immediate medical investigation to rule out life-threatening causes like toxins or hypoglycemia. |
| <b>Slow Recovery</b>      | Your pet does not regain awareness or remains severely disoriented/aggressive <b>for more than 2 hours</b> after a seizure.       | May indicate severe brain swelling or injury.   |

If you are concerned about your pet's seizure activity, please do not hesitate to contact us immediately. Early diagnosis and management are key to ensuring your pet's best quality of life.

