



# 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> (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> (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.



**VALLEY**  
Veterinary Clinic