



If you have any English Language difficulties, please ask staff to book an interpreter. From home contact the **free** Telephone Interpreter Services on **03 9605 3056**. Ask staff if this information is available in your preferred language.



Seizures

What Eastern Health can do to help

This brochure provides information on what we can do to help you if we suspect you have experienced a first seizure.

- A seizure is a sudden change in the electrical activity in the brain which can cause temporary changes in the body including affecting movement, behaviour, awareness, and emotions. Seizures may be due to a number of causes including epilepsy which is a condition where people are pre-disposed to seizures. However, seizures may also occur due to other medical conditions or may occur only once and do not require treatment.
- Seizures are not uncommon and the **First Seizure Clinic** at Eastern Health provides expertise in helping patients who are suspected to have experienced a seizure.

Why have I been referred to this clinic?

- Your Doctor thinks you may have had a seizure and would like you to see a Neurologist who is an expert in this area. They will investigate whether this was a seizure and if you have a risk of having more seizures.
- An appointment will be made for you to attend the **First Seizure Clinic** on a Friday afternoon. Whilst you are waiting for this appointment you must not drive and should avoid other activities such as swimming and working at heights which would put you in danger if another seizure occurred.

What do I need to bring to the clinic?

- Please bring any test results or scans as well as a list of your usual medications.
- It is often very useful to have any witness (*a person who was there when you had a seizure*) report. If possible, ask a witness to the seizure to attend or let them know that the doctor may wish to discuss what they saw.

What can I expect when I attend the clinic?

- The **First Seizure Clinic** is staffed by Neurologists with expertise in the diagnosis and management of epilepsy. They will investigate to find out whether you have had a seizure, or if there is another explanation for the blackout or attack you experienced.
- At the clinic, the Doctor will talk to you about what happened and what may have led to the suspicion you might have had a seizure. He will ask you questions but may also wish to speak to a witness (*someone who was there when you had a seizure*). They may request certain investigations to help understand what has happened.

What investigations are needed as part of the clinic assessment?

- This will depend on the outcome of the assessment. Investigations may be requested by your referring Doctor before attending the clinic, or they may be requested when you attend the clinic.
- The common tests include an electro-encephalography (EEG) which is a non-invasive test of your brain activity and a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan which is a non-invasive scan to assess brain structure.

Each of these tests takes less than an hour and are done at the hospital.

Can I drive?

- Not right now. If you are suspected of having a first seizure then you cannot legally drive.
- The doctors in the clinic will advise you regarding what the driving restriction will be for you. These restrictions can vary a lot depending on what diagnosis is made.

What else should I avoid before coming to the clinic?

- Other than driving, it is important to avoid activities that may be high risk if you had a seizure whilst doing them. This includes but is not limited to: working from heights; bathing and swimming; operating heavy machinery. The doctors in the clinic will give you more advice about seizure safety.

Does this mean I have epilepsy?

- Some people who attend the clinic may be diagnosed with epilepsy but many are not. Epilepsy is a condition in which a person is at risk of more seizures and may need medication to prevent them.
- At least half of the patients who come to the **First Seizure Clinic** are not diagnosed with epilepsy and may have experienced a different type of event known as a seizure mimic. This includes problems such as fainting (*also known as syncope*) and anxiety attacks.

What happens if I have another seizure?

- This will depend on the circumstances:

Usually, if you have another seizure, it would be most appropriate to attend the Doctor who has referred you to the **First Seizure Clinic**.

If you had attended the Emergency Department it would be more appropriate to return to Emergency.

Important to note:

A seizure can be a medical emergency and it is appropriate to call 000 if you or someone with you is worried.

Are there other resources that can help me better understand what has happened?

The websites below include information on **First Aid support** for a person experiencing a seizure as well as several Australian epilepsy advocacy groups with useful and informative online resources:

- Epilepsy Foundation of Australia - <http://epilepsyfoundation.org.au/>
- Epilepsy Action Australia - <https://www.epilepsy.org.au/>
- Information on driving is available on these websites as well as at the Austroads website - <https://austroads.com.au/drivers-and-vehicles/assessing-fitness-to-drive>

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