

THE FATAL FOUR

There are four major health issues identified in in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that have led to serious illnesses, infections, and sometimes death. They are called the Fatal Four: dehydration, seizures, choking/aspiration, and constipation.

SEIZURES

Mild Symptoms

Staring
Unresponsive
Confused
Twitching of face
Lip smacking
Numbness/tingling in body

Intense Symptoms

Loss of consciousness
Brief muscle jerks and spasms
Loss of bladder or bowel
Limp/collapse on floor
Rigid muscle tone and jerking
Change in breathing pattern

What to Do During a Seizure

Ensure safe surroundings
Loosen clothing, jewelry around neck
Remove glasses
Turn person on side

Provide padding under person's head
Stay with person
Check for breathing throughout seizure

Do Not!

- Do not put anything in mouth (cannot swallow tongue!)
- Do not restrain or hold the person down (cannot stop a seizure!)
- Do not give anything to eat or drink until fully awake (person may choke/ aspirate!)
- Do not attempt artificial respiration unless not breathing

Call 911 if:

- It is the person's first seizure
- The person is not breathing
- The seizure lasts over 5 minutes
- Seizures continue one after another without the person regaining consciousness
- Head or other bodily injury occurred during seizure
- Seizure occurs in the water

Follow your agency policies.

Be Proactive to Prevent Seizures

- Administer medications as prescribed
- Avoid triggers that cause seizures
- Discuss seizure record with physician

SEIZURES MAY BE LIFE THREATENING IF THE PERSON STOPS BREATHING, HAS AN IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT DURING A SEIZURE, OR FALLS AND SUSTAINS A SEVERE INJURY.

Source: PA Dept. of Human Services PowerPoint on The Fatal Four, August 2018