

# THE FATAL FOUR IN I/DD

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



DEHYDRATION



SEIZURE



CHOKING



CONSTIPATION

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

## SYMPTOMS OF 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 control
- Limp, collapsed 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, or hard, sharp objects.
- Turn person on side.
- Look at clock/watch to time length of seizure.
- Provide padding under person's head.
- Stay with the person.
- Check for breathing throughout the seizure.

## WHAT NOT TO DO DURING A SEIZURE

- Do not put anything in person's mouth - a person cannot swallow their tongue.
- Do not restrain or hold the person down - a seizure cannot be stopped.
- Do not give the person anything to eat or drink until fully awake - this could cause choking/aspiration.
- Do not attempt artificial respiration unless the person is not breathing.

## CALL 911

- If it is the person's first seizure
- If the person is not breathing
- If the seizure lasts over 5 minutes
- If seizures continue one after another without the person regaining consciousness
- If bodily injury occurred during seizure, especially head injury
- If the seizure occurs in the water

## BE PROACTIVE TO PREVENT SEIZURES

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