

What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy means repeated seizures due to abnormal activity in the brain. It is caused by an abnormality in the brain itself.

What happens during a seizure?

Some dogs seem to know when they are about to have a seizure and their behaviour may change.

Once a seizure starts the dog is unconscious, they cannot hear you or respond to you. Most dogs will become stiff, fall onto their side and make running movements with their legs. They may cry out and may lose control of their bowels or bladder. Most seizures last between 1 and 3 minutes.

After a seizure dogs behave in different ways. Some may get up straightaway and carry on, while others can be dazed and confused for up to 24 hours.

When will seizures occur?

Most seizures occur while your dog is relaxed and resting quietly. They often occur in the evening or at night.

Is there a treatment for epilepsy?

It is usually not possible to remove the cause of the seizures, but medication can be used to control the seizures. Treatment will not cure the disease, even a well controlled epileptic will have occasional seizures.

How can I help ensure treatment is successful?

- 1. Give medication regularly**
It is important that medication is given at the same time each day.
- 2. Never change anything without consulting the veterinary practice first**
Never adjust the dose of medication or stop treatment without asking your vet. Some other drugs can affect the way the medication your dog is on work, so always consult your vet before giving any other medications.
- 3. Keep records**
Keep a diary of the number of seizures, when they occur, for how long and what your dog was doing at the time and when medication was given. Each treatment plan is specific for each individual dog, and keeping a diary of events is very useful to see any patterns.

What should I do while my dog is having a seizure?

The most important this is to stay calm. Your dog is unconscious during the seizure and is not in pain or distressed. Make sure your pet is not in a position to injure themselves, but otherwise do not try to interfere.

Will the seizure cause harm to my dog?

Seizures can cause damage to the brain, and repeated seizures make it more likely further seizures will occur. Occasionally they may bite their tongue, there may be a lot of blood but it is unlikely to be serious.

When should I contact the veterinary practice?

If your dog does not come out of the seizure within 5 minutes, or has repeated seizures close together, contact the veterinary practice immediately.