

Seizures

Seizures or fits are caused by abnormal activity within the brain, causing the animal to lose control of the body and act in an erratic way. This activity can be caused by an issue within the nervous system such as a chemical imbalance or as a reaction to disease.

Clinical signs of Seizure: They may vary from mild to severe based on the area of the brain affected and may include a combination of the following:

- Collapse
- Loss of consciousness
- Irregular jerking movements and Paddling/swimming legs
- Tense/cramped muscles
- Eyes rolling to the back of the head or moving side to side
- Excessive drooling/frothing at the mouth
- Loss of bowel and/or bladder control

What to do if your dog shows signs of Seizure:

Safety first! Try to stay calm; it will help your pet.

- It is important to not touch your pet if they are having a seizure unless they are in immediate danger or at risk of falling, they may bite or react aggressively if frightened during the experience.
- Clear the area around the pet to allow them to move freely.
- Do not try to wrap them in a blanket; it can cause them to overheat.

Reduce stimulation

- Turn off bright lights and close curtains.
- Remove any other animals or children from the immediate area.
- Turn off any music or television.
- Speak softly while around your pet to lessen the risk of startling them

Possible causes:

- Heatstroke (Short nosed pets (Brachycephalic breeds), elderly or very young are particularly at risk.
- Toxin ingestion or poisoning
- Hyper or Hypocalcaemia
- Head trauma (for example, after a road traffic incident)
- Epilepsy
- Liver disease
- Brain tumours
- Severe infections

IMPORTANT!

Make a note of the time the seizure episode began.

**Call your vet immediately for guidance!
If possible video record the event- this will assist the vet with diagnosis and treatment.**

Treatment - The goal of treatment is to stabilise the patient, this can be achieved with a combination of therapies, which may include:

- Treating the cause of the seizure- this is assessed by diagnostic work including blood tests and imaging i.e. CT or MRI
- Avoiding triggers- such as high stress environments, bright flashing lights, loud noises etc
- Anti-epileptic drugs can be used to help stabilise a patient and maintain a good quality of life
- Diet changes- Studies by the Royal Vet College have shown certain foods can help idiopathic epilepsy patients



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