Dealing with Asthma and Epilepsy in Schools

Alamance Burlington School System
Asthma: Information provided by American Lung Association

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that makes it harder to move air in and out of your lungs. It can start at any age.

With asthma, swollen airways become extra sensitive to some things that you are exposed to in the environment every day, or asthma "triggers." When you breathe in a trigger, your airways create extra mucus and swell even more, making it hard to breathe.
Triggers - anything that can cause asthma symptoms

- Mold
- Pet dander
- Dust mites
- Colds
- Strong smells
- Pollen
- Cockroaches
- Weather
- Smoke
- Exercise

http://www.respirasano.org/know-your-triggers
Warning Signs of an Asthma Attack

**Early Warning Signs:**

Coughing (maybe worse at night or with exercise)

Wheezing

Itchy, runny nose

Itchy, sore throat

Tightness or pain in chest

Yellow zone of asthma action plan

**Late warning signs - EMERGENCY**

Fast Breathing

Flaring nostrils

Retractions - sinking of skin between the ribs or front of neck

Changes in skin color

Difficulty walking or talking

Red Zone on Asthma Action Plan

See video link from American Lung Association
Steps to Follow for an Asthma Episode in the School Setting

If student has excessive coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or chest tightness:

- Have student sit in an upright position; speak calmly and reassuringly
- Have student breath slowly through the mouth exhaling through pursed lips.
- Offer water to drink
- Use student specific quick-relief inhaler if available:
- Never leave student alone
- Call for the school nurse if available
- Notify parent if child has severe breathing difficulty or medication is not effective in 15 minutes.
- Get emergency help if student has any of these symptoms: **CALL 911**
  - Inhaler not helping
  - Breathing hard and fast
  - Nostrils open wide
  - Can't walk or talk well
How to Use Inhaler

Video with Spacer/Chamber

Video for inhaler use without spacer/chamber
Important School System Reminders

Review any emergency medical plans for students in your class. (These should be in red folders and accessible to a substitute teacher.)

Refer any student concerns to the school nurse for follow up. (example student states he/she has asthma, but no emergency plan or medicine)

Students must have ABSS authorization for medication at school completed and signed by both a parent/guardian and physician.

See ABSS medication policy for details

Never leave student alone

Link to ABSS authorization for medication form:


Link to ABSS Medication Policy:

http://policy.microscribepub.com/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?clientId=1409197790&depth=2&infobase=alamance_burlington.nfo&softpage=PL_frame
References


- [http://asthma.ncdhhs.gov/](http://asthma.ncdhhs.gov/)

What is Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a neurological condition which affects the nervous system. Epilepsy is also known as a seizure disorder. It is usually diagnosed after a person has had at least two seizures that were not caused by some known medical condition.

What are Seizures?

Seizures seen in epilepsy are caused by disturbances in the electrical activity of the brain. The seizures in epilepsy may be related to a brain injury or a family tendency, but most of the time the cause is unknown…
What is a Seizure?

A seizure is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain. A seizure usually affects how a person appears or acts for a short time. Many different things can occur during a seizure. Whatever the brain and body can do normally can also occur during a seizure.
Types of Seizures

Seizures are generally described in two major groups of seizures, primary generalized seizures and partial seizures. The difference between the types of seizures is in how and where they begin in the brain.

Primary generalized seizures
Primary generalized seizures begin with a widespread electrical discharge that involves both sides of the brain at once. Hereditary factors are important in many of these seizures.

Partial seizures
Partial seizures begin with an electrical discharge in one limited area of the brain. Many different things can cause partial seizures. These include head injury, brain infection, stroke, tumor, or changes in the way an area of the brain was formed before birth (called cortical dysplasias). Many times, no known cause is found, but genetic factors may be important in some partial seizures. Partial seizures can be broken down further, depending on whether a person's awareness or consciousness (the ability to respond and remember) is affected.
Seizure First Aid

Think of 3 key areas of seizure first aid.

**Care and Comfort First Aid**: General first aid for all seizure types to keep someone safe.

**Tailoring First Aid**: Specific steps for different seizure types.

**Responding to Seizures - Interventions for out of hospital use**: First aid steps to help stop or shorten a seizure or prevent an emergency situation. This may involve giving a rescue treatment (often called "as needed" medicine or treatment such as Diastat) that has been recommended by the student's health care team. The rescue treatments described here can be given by non-medical people who are not in a hospital setting. They are intended for use by anyone (the person with seizures, family member or other observer) who has been trained in their use.
Call for Emergency Medical Help

A seizure lasts 5 minutes or longer.

One seizure occurs right after another without the person regaining consciousness or coming to between seizures.

Seizures occur closer together than usual for that person.

Breathing becomes difficult or the person appears to be choking.

The seizure occurs in water.

Injury may have occurred.

The person asks for medical help.
Important School System Reminders

Students with known seizures should have a red folder with an emergency medical plan. Please be sure to review the important specific medical plan for your student with seizures. Talk to your school nurse if you have any questions.

Some students may have emergency medications such as Diastat. Please take the time to review this video about Diastat. Again if your student requires diastat your school nurse will review the plan with you.
References