

You are babysitting a child with epilepsy. Now what?

Or,

You are leaving your child with a babysitter.

Babysitting a child with epilepsy is usually no different to babysitting any other child. It is important to always treat the child with epilepsy the same as any other child for whom you might be caring.

It is possible, although unlikely, that the child with epilepsy will have a seizure while in your care. A seizure means that there is an electrical disturbance in the brain. This is usually very brief, lasting no more than a few minutes.

Most children with epilepsy do not have seizures very often. This is because they take antiepileptic medication that prevents seizures occurring and enables them to lead normal active lives.

However, some children with epilepsy continue to have seizures despite being on medication. Whether the child in your care has seizures frequently or rarely, it is important to know what the seizures look like and what you should do to help if one does occur.

There are many different types of seizures. It is therefore important to ask the parents (or tell the babysitter) how to identify a seizure and how they want you to handle their child's seizures. You will need to know a few simple steps that will keep the child safe until the seizure comes to an end. There is nothing you can do to stop the seizure – it will run its course. Be reassured that most seizures are not emergencies and do not need emergency care.

Be familiar with seizure first aid. There is a whole section on first aid on EpilepsyU.com.

We have also provided here for you to print a nice Babysitter's Guide created by the North East Valley Division General Practice, Victoria, Australia.

Babysitter's Guide

Child's name =
Typical seizures look like
Does child have any warning before the seizure?
Typical seizures last for
How does the child act after a seizure?
What to do during a seizure [see also FIRST AID POSTER]
When to call an Ambulance
Medication
Does babysitter need to give medication?
Which medication?
At what times [NB It is not necessary to give medication during or immediately following a seizure.]
Is there anything the child is not allowed to do?
Is there anything else the babysitter should know?
Parents' telephone number

Please note that children with epilepsy are at risk of drowning if a seizure occurs in water. They require close supervision or you may prefer to avoid baths or swimming altogether.