How to Respond to Substance Use-Related Seizures

BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

CALL 9-1-1 if someone is having a seizure OR is having seizure-like movements

Signs a person may be having a substance use-related seizure:

1. Muscles suddenly tense up and the body becomes stiff
2. Body then begins to make quick, jerking movements (like tremors or shaking).

WAIT

Check that it's not an opioid poisoning first!
Check if they're breathing normally (12+ breaths per minute and no unusual sounds). If they are NOT breathing normally, follow SAVE ME steps.

DURING A SEIZURE:

1



Clear area and remove hazards to prevent injury.

2



Time the seizure (should last ~3 min).

3

Stay with them until the seizure ends.

Do not touch them or put anything in their mouth

AFTER A SEIZURE:

4 Place them in the recovery position on their side.



5

- Keep the area quiet and calm.
- Explain they may feel confused, exhausted.
- Encourage them to go with paramedics.



For more harm reduction information visit: www.towardtheheart.com
For BC mental health and substance use supports visit: helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

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