

# NEUROLOGY

## Focal Seizures

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Focal seizures, also called partial seizures, affect one focal area or muscle group and are normally not as dramatic as grand mal seizures, but they do originate in the same parts of the brain (see seizure link at the bottom of the page for more generalized seizure information). Partial seizures that are inadequately treated usually get worse over time as the seizures affect more and larger parts of the brain and, if uncontrolled, can cause permanent brain damage. One major distinguishing factor between a focal versus grand mal seizure is that, during a simple focal seizure, it is unlikely that consciousness is impaired and there usually is an ability to respond to normal stimuli.

Canine focal seizures can be caused by inflammation/infection, head injury, disease such as hydrocephalus (water on the brain), poisoning, brain tumors or epilepsy.

It is important to note that some dogs are frightened, disoriented, or aggressive after a seizure. Behavior is unpredictable, use caution around a pet after a seizure event.

Some of the more common breeds that are affected by seizures include, but not limited to, the following: Australian Shepherd, Beagle, Bernese Mountain Dog, Border Collie, Boxer, Cocker Spaniel, Dachshund, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever, Miniature Schnauzer, Siberian Husky, and Vizsla.

Treatment and prognosis for seizures depends on the underlying etiology (cause) of the seizure itself and will include an anticonvulsant medication(s) at the core of therapy. It is important for pet owners to understand that once a pet starts an

anticonvulsant medication, it is very rare that this medication is discontinued, and the pet will need to remain on one or more medications long-term.

They should also understand that no medication or combination of medications will prevent seizures in the pet altogether. The goal of treatment is to decrease the severity and frequency of seizures without subjecting the pet to adverse effects associated with anti-epileptic medication. Normally one seizure in a two to three month period is considered very good seizure control/management.

For more information on seizures, please consult the seizure handout on the website found [here](#).

For [more information on canine epilepsy and seizures](#) can be found on our website. .

Below are resources:

- Article on seizure disorders in dogs: <https://veterinarypartner.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=19239&id=4951440>
- A hand-out on handling page seizures: <https://www.dvm360.com/view/client-handout-handling-your-pet-s-seizures>

Prognosis depends on several things, including 1) type of infection (i.e. fungal infections tend to be worse than bacterial infections) and 2) how affected the patient is (paraplegic dogs that are unable to feel their back legs tend to have a worse prognosis than those that have less severe signs).