

Four Stages of a Seizure

The following are the phases and possible symptoms associated with a seizure. Not everyone with seizures will experience all four stages or every symptom. Symptoms depend on where in the brain the seizure occurs. There are many different types of seizures.

Stage 1: prodromal

- Not experienced by everyone
- Could last hours or days
- Person may become agitated
- Mood swings
- Behavioral changes
- Depression or apathy
- Insomnia
- Impaired focus and attention
- Impaired spatial perception

Stage 2: aural

- Not experienced for every seizure
- Vision loss or blurring vision
- Feeling "out of body" or disconnected
- Intense panic or fear
- Emotional volatility
- Hallucinations
- Difficulty breathing
- Sensory Changes

Stage 3: ictal

- Partial or full loss of consciousness
- Lapses or disruptions of memory
- Chewing or mouth movements
- Loss of motor control
- Confusion
- Convulsions
- Speech differences

Stage 4: post-ictal

- Loss of consciousness/partial consciousness
- Confusion, speech impaired
- Intense depression, emptiness, or suicidal ideation
- Feelings of humiliation or guilt

- Amnesia or memory disturbance
- Inhibited motor movement coordination
- Typically lasts 5-30 minutes

Approximately 1.2% of people have a seizure disorder; however, certain populations have much higher prevalence. Among the most common conditions correlated with seizure are traumatic brain injury, ADHD, autism, and PTSD. Common triggers for seizures include bright or flashing lights, intense stress, PTSD flashbacks, low blood sugar, and sleep deprivation.