

Management of Seizure Activity in Water **Guidelines for Community Programs**

The following guidelines are recommended when a child with a seizure disorder is participating in water activities (e.g., swim program) during attendance at a community program.

Identification and Awareness

The child's health care plan and emergency medication, if prescribed, should accompany the child to the water activity.

The child should be clearly identified to community program personnel attending the water activity and lifeguard(s) on duty.

It is recommended that a child does not go into the water if he/she has had a seizure(s) in the last 24 hours, unless daily seizure activity is a usual pattern for the child and the seizure activity is very mild.

When participating in water activities, a child with a seizure disorder should have a person at their side that is capable of rescuing them at all times until there is a high likelihood that the child will not have a seizure (i.e., has been seizure free for a long period). The person delegated to be with the child should not be responsible for other children while in the water.

If there is any concerns regarding the child's safety while in the water, community program personnel and/or lifeguard on duty may choose to not have the child participate in the water activity.

Seizures management in water

The main goal in managing a seizure that occurs in the water is to prevent physical injury and maintain an open airway. Community program personnel and personnel employed at the pool/lake should work together to ensure the safety of the child at all times.

Community program personnel that have received URIS training by a registered nurse on the management of the child's seizures should be designated to accompany the child in the water and should remain within arm's length of the child at all times.

When a child has a seizure in the water, the community program personnel accompanying the child in the water notifies the lifeguard on duty immediately. The lifeguard enters the pool and/or provides direction to community program personnel in the management of the seizure.

Whenever possible, the child should be removed from water when a seizure occurs. If it is not safe to remove the child from the water, the lifeguard is

responsible to ensure the child's is supported appropriately to ensure the airway remains open.

If the child requires emergency medication (e.g., sublingual Lorazepam), it is to be administered as outlined in the child's health care plan. Community program personnel that have received URIS training is designated to administer the rescue medication.

It is recommended that the community program personnel designated to administer sublingual Lorazepam does not enter the water as sublingual medication will dissolve quickly if it becomes wet.

The lifeguard is responsible to determine the management of the child's seizure (e.g., when and how to remove child from pool, when to call 911/EMS) and implement CPR/first aid, if required. It is recommended that when a child has a tonic clonic seizure in the water, 911/EMS is initiated immediately due to the potential risk of aspirating water.

Responsibilities

Community program administrator (or designate)

- Communicate guidelines for management of seizure with community program personnel and parent/guardian of child with seizure disorder
- Ensure child with a seizure disorder is identified to community program personnel attending water activity and lifeguard(s) on duty
- Ensure health care plan, emergency medication (if prescribed) and other required supplies (e.g., glove, towel) are available at the water activity
- Designate community program personnel to accompany child in the water
- Designate community program personnel to administer rescue medication, if required
- Contact parent/guardian and community program administrator if child has seizure at the water activity
- Document incident as per community program protocol
- Designate community program personnel to accompany child to hospital, if required
- Ensure all other children are promptly and safely removed from the water if a seizure occurs

Community program personnel accompanying child in water

- Remain within arm's length of child at all times
- Request immediate assistance from lifeguard on duty if child has a seizure in the water
- Time duration of seizure
- Bring child to edge of water as instructed by lifeguard

Community program personnel designated to administer rescue medication, if required

- Ensure hands are dry and gloved prior to administration of medication
- Administer medication as outlined in the child's health care plan

Lifeguard

- Enter water immediately when notified that child is having seizure or provide verbal direction to community program personnel that is accompanying child in water
- Ensure child's airway remains open
- Determine if child can be safely removed from water
- Determine need to initiate 911/EMS and designate personnel to call 911/EMS.