

SEIZURE CLASSIFICATION GUIDE : ILAE 2025

Look for Clues

Age of onset

History

± EEG & MRI

Pre-ictal phase

- What is the context of occurrence? Are there provoking factors? (e.g., reflex, sleep-related)
- Time of day



Ictal phase

Ictal onset / aura

Ictal progression

- **Is onset witnessed? Is there aura?**
- **Consciousness (classifier):** assess recall and responsiveness
- **Bilateral tonic-clonic seizures (BTCS) (classifier)** present?
- **Somatotopic modifiers (descriptor):** side/symmetry + body part
- **Semiological features (descriptor)** [back page]
 - a. Elementary motor phenomena
 - b. Complex motor phenomena
 - c. Sensory motor phenomena
 - d. Cognitive and language phenomena
 - e. Autonomic phenomena
 - f. Affective (emotional) phenomena
 - g. Indescribable aura
- **What is the chronological order of semiological features?**
- **Duration**

Post-ictal phase

- Postictal phenomena (descriptor) [back page]
- Duration



Identify the main class

Focal

Unknown

(whether focal or generalized)

Generalized

Unclassified

Identify seizure type based on classifiers: Consciousness and BTCS

Focal*

- Focal preserved consciousness seizure (FPC)
- Focal impaired consciousness seizure (FIC)
- Focal-to-bilateral tonic-clonic seizure (FBTC)

Unknown*

- Unknown whether focal or generalized - preserved consciousness seizure (PC)
- Unknown whether focal or generalized - impaired consciousness seizure (IC)
- Unknown whether focal or generalized - bilateral tonic-clonic seizure (BTC)

Generalized

- Basic:** Absence seizures (AS)
- Expanded:**
- Typical absence seizure (TA)
 - Atypical absence seizure (AA)
 - Myoclonic absence seizure (MA)
 - Eyelid myoclonia with / without absence (EMA)

Basic: Generalized tonic-clonic seizure (GTC)

- Expanded:**
- Myoclonic tonic-clonic seizure
 - Absence-to-tonic-clonic seizure

Basic: Other generalized seizures

- Expanded:**
- Generalized myoclonic seizure (GM)
 - Generalized clonic seizure (GC)
 - Generalized negative myoclonic seizure (GNM)
 - Generalized epileptic spasms (GES)
 - Generalized tonic seizure (GT)
 - Generalized atonic seizure (GA)
 - Generalized myoclonic-atonic seizure (GMA)

Identify semiological features based on descriptors

Basic

- With observable manifestations
- Without observable manifestations

Expanded

- Use semiology descriptors [back page] in chronological sequence (with arrows →)

* If consciousness could not be assessed, classify as "Focal" or as "Unknown"

Tip for applying to clinical note



- **Guide:** **Class** + **Classifier** + **Basic Descriptor:** Expanded Descriptor
- **Case example:** During long-term video-EEG monitoring, a 28-year-old female patient experiences an ascending sensation from the stomach and then starts chewing and manipulating nearby objects using the right hand. The patient can recall what happens during these episodes and is able to respond.
- **Classify as:** **Focal preserved consciousness seizure (FPC) with observable manifestations as follows:** epigastric aura → orolimentary automatisms + gestural automatisms with the right hand + preserved awareness and responsiveness

Descriptors for focal seizures and seizures unknown whether focal or generalized

(adapted from reference; Beniczky S et al)

Somatotopic modifiers

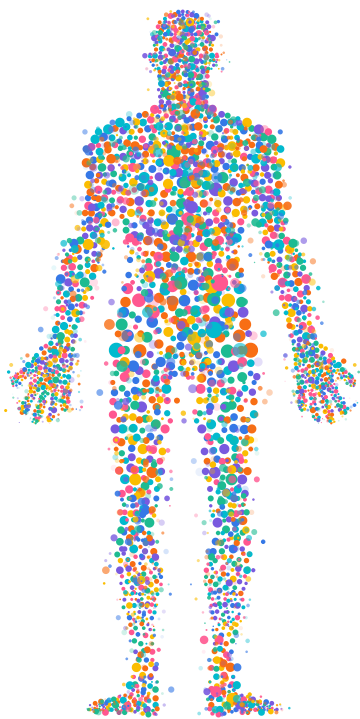


Side & symmetry

- Left
- Right
- Bilateral-symmetric
- Bilateral-asymmetric



Body part



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Reference: Beniczky S, et al.
Updated classification of epileptic seizures: Position paper of the International League Against Epilepsy. *Epilepsia*. 2025 Jun;66(6):1804-1823.
doi: 10.1111/epi.18338

Semiological features

1. Elementary motor phenomena

- Akinetic
- Astatic
- Atonic
- Clonic
- Dystonic
- Epileptic nystagmus
- Epileptic spasm
- Eye blinking
- Eye deviation
- Gyrotory
- Head orientation
- Ictal paresis
- Motor / behavioral arrest
- Myoclonic
- Epileptic negative myoclonus
- Myoclonic-atonic
- Tonic (focal tonic, chapeau de gendarme, fencing posture)
- Tonic-clonic (figure-of-four)
- Versive

2. Complex motor phenomena

- Automatisms
 - Gestural automatisms-distal
 - Gestural automatisms-genital
 - Gestural automatisms-proximal
 - Ictal grasping
 - Mimic automatisms (gelastic, dacrystic)
 - Orolimentary automatisms
 - Verbal automatisms
 - Vocal automatisms
- Hyperkinetic behavior

3. Sensory phenomena

- Auditory
- Body-perception illusion
- Depersonalization

- Gustatory
- Olfactory
- Somatosensory
 - Painful
 - Nonpainful
- Vestibular / dizziness
- Visual

4. Cognitive and language phenomena

- Aphasia
- Confusion/disorientation
- Dysmnnesia
 - Amnesia
 - Déjà vu / déjà vécu / jamais vu / dreamy state / reminiscence
- Forced thinking
- Other focal cognitive deficits (e.g., anosognosia, apraxia, neglect)

5. Autonomic phenomena

- Cardiovascular
 - Ictal asystole
 - Ictal bradycardia
 - Ictal tachycardia
- Cutaneous / thermoregulatory
 - Flushing
 - Piloerection
 - Sweating
- Epigastric
- Gastrointestinal
 - Borborygmi
 - Flatulence
 - Hypersalivation
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Polydipsia
 - Sialorrhea
 - Spitting

- Pupillary
 - Miosis
 - Mydriasis
- Respiratory
 - Apnea
 - Choking
 - Hyperventilation
 - Hypoventilation
- Urinary
 - Incontinence
 - Urinary urge

6. Affective (emotional) phenomena

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Ecstatic/bliss
- Fear
- Guilt
- Mirth
- Mystic
- Sadness
- Sexual

7. Indescribable aura

8. Postictal phenomena

- Autonomic signs
- Blindness (hemianopsia or amaurosis)
- Confusion
- Headache
- Language dysfunction
- Nose-wiping
- Palinacousis
- Paresis (Todd's paresis)
- Psychiatric signs
- Unresponsiveness