

## EPILEPSY

Epilepsy is a disturbance in the electrical activity of the brain this causes a brief episode of altered awareness.

The onset is usually sudden but it does not last long & the recovery is spontaneous. This may be followed by a period of drowsiness or confusion.

There are 4 types of Seizure ( fits ) that are most commonly seen.

1 Absence, 2 Tonic, 3 Drop & 4 Tonic- Clonic (convulsion)

1 Absence--Momentary loss of awareness similar to a daydream. These can be numerous & hardly noticeable, you may think that your rider is just not paying attention!

2 Tonic-- Arms may stiffen & the head drop forward. This may last a few seconds (occasionally they may make strange noises )

3 Drop-- Sudden loss of tone & the rider becomes floppy. If he is mounted he may fall off. Recovery is rapid.

4 Tonic- clonic ( convulsion ) The body will stiffen first & then the limbs begin to jerk, they may have shallow breathing & incontinence.

Apart from the tonic-clonic seizure, there is no need to dismount the rider. Turn the horse off the track to a safe position & wait for the return of the responses

For the tonic - clonic seizure the rider should be dismounted & laid on the ground in the recovery position. Tight clothing should be loosened & the area cleared of objects that could be a hazard. Stay

with the rider, give reassurance & wait for a response to voice or touch. Give them plenty of time to recover as they may well be drowsy or confused at this stage & also be as discreet as is possible if incontinence has occurred, especially if adult as they may feel very embarrassed by this,

Riders with Epilepsy are most likely to be accompanied by staff from their school or residence who know them & the pattern of their seizures well. They will be able to identify any unusual aspects of the seizure that may need medical intervention.

RDA welcomes riders with epilepsy but the condition must be well controlled so that it does not pose a risk to the rider when mounted or to other riders, horses or helpers in the group. The final decision rests with the Group Instructor in consultation with the other professionals involved. It is advised that a carer is always present who has the expertise to deal with any incident.

Anyone who has uncontrolled epilepsy may not ride.