

## Classification of Seizures

Some anti-seizure medications may work well for certain seizure types but not as well for others. Thus, the accurate classification of symptoms is important for prescribing purposes, although individual patient response and other factors are also involved.

Dramatic improvements in managing seizures over the past twenty-five years have been achieved both with the introduction of several new epilepsy drugs and with refinements in seizure classification. The current classification scheme is based upon a system introduced in 1969 by the International League Against Epilepsy. This International Classification assigns seizures to one of two major groups according to how much of the brain is affected by the electrical disturbance which produces the seizure. Under this classification, seizures are partial or generalized. A related classification allows placement of individual seizure types into more than 25 recognizable syndromes.

Listed below is the broader classification of seizures under the partial and generalized groupings.

### International Classification of Seizures

#### Partial Seizures

- A. Simple partial seizures (consciousness not impaired)**
  - 1. with motor symptoms
  - 2. with sensory symptoms
  - 3. with autonomic symptoms
  - 4. with psychic symptoms
- B. Complex partial seizures (with impaired consciousness)**
  - 1. simple partial seizures followed by impairment of consciousness
  - 2. with impairment of consciousness at seizure onset
- C. Partial seizures evolving to secondarily generalized seizures**
  - 1. simple partial secondarily generalized
  - 2. complex partial secondarily generalized
  - 3. simple partial evolving to complex partial evolving to generalized

#### Generalized Seizures

- A. Absence seizures (formerly called petit mal)
- B. Myoclonic seizures
- C. Clonic seizures
- D. Tonic seizures
- E. Tonic clonic seizures (formerly called grand mal)
- F. Atonic seizures (drop attacks)