

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR BASSET HAS A SEIZURE

Plan ahead

Realising that your Basset has had a seizure will be a shock but knowing exactly what you need to do if it happens again will keep both of you safe. Plan a "seizure drill" beforehand while everything is calm. You will be more confident and able to help your Basset if you know what to do and where things are.



❑ Will you need to close a door to a stairway or room that could be hazardous? Remove objects from around your Basset so that he will come to no harm?

❑ Will other pets need to be restrained or removed from the area? Sometimes other animals may act aggressively toward the seizing pet, so get them out of the way quickly if a seizure starts.



❑ If your vet has prescribed rectal diazepam or other emergency-use drugs, do you know where they are and how to administer them even under the stress of a seizure?

❑ Where is your vet's phone number and/or the nearest emergency clinic? What is the best route to get there and how long will it take? Don't speed or you won't be able to help your Basset if you are delayed by the police or, worse still, in hospital from an accident.

❑ If you need to transport your seizing or unconscious Basset, how will you do it safely? Can you carry him from the house or back garden and get him into your car? As your Basset may seize again or be in the post-ictal disorientation stage while you are transporting him, you will both be safest if he is in a crate.



Continue to be careful afterwards as your Basset may be disorientated and may not act normally for a while.

During a seizure



Stay calm as most seizures are very brief, the average one lasting less than 2 minutes. Timing how long it lasts will help your vet, also observing exactly what your Basset does during the seizure. Make sure he is safe. He will NOT SWALLOW HIS TONGUE. He may chomp his jaws so don't try to pull his tongue out as either you or his tongue is likely to get bitten. KEEP YOUR HANDS AWAY FROM HIS MOUTH.

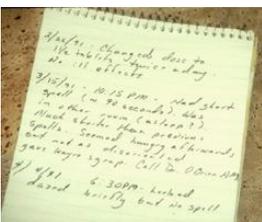
Your vet may have recommended giving rectal or oral diazepam, or extra oral Phenobarbital. If giving orally, first be sure your Basset is awake enough to swallow and aware enough not to bite. He may be hungry immediately after the seizure so adding the medication to a ball of food can be an easy way to give it. If lower blood sugar is suspected as a cause of the seizure, your vet may recommend giving some thing like honey to bring the blood sugar up quickly.

The altered (post-ictal) behaviour following a seizure may be as disturbing as the seizure itself. Your Basset may appear disoriented and blind for up to several hours afterwards. Usually just leaving him alone and ensuring that he won't injure himself until he returns to normal is the best approach. Reassuring words and petting can calm him though he may be oblivious to attempts to help. If your Basset is agitated or irritable during the post-ictal phase, be careful - especially if children are involved, as he may snap uncharacteristically. No hugging or holding him if he is behaving this way!

When to seek immediate veterinary help

If your Basset has a seizure that lasts more than 5-10 minutes without stop, he needs to be taken to your vet straight away. Within 30 minutes of continuous seizing risk of brain damage rises dramatically - and remember it will take time to get to your vet or emergency clinic. Don't confuse the post-ictal stage (blindness, pacing, agitation etc) with the seizure itself. Post-ictal behaviour can often continue for hours. If this is prolonged or severe (for example if your Basset is at risk of hurting himself or is behaving aggressively), even though he isn't actually seizing, consider contacting your vet.

Repeated seizures can be dangerous. Clusters of seizures have a tendency to progress to continuous seizures (status epilepticus). If you pet has 3 or more seizures in a day, take him to your vet immediately.



Finally Keep a diary

This is important, as the information you collect will help your vet give your Basset the correct treatment

- ~ Age of your Basset when first episode occurs
- ~ Detailed description of the episode, the time and its duration
- ~ Does the episode occur while your Basset is at rest?
- ~ Does your Basset have any behavioural changes before the episode starts – eg attention seeking, whining, hiding?
- ~ Is your Basset conscious during the episode?
- ~ How long does it take your Basset to recover after the episode?
- ~ What does your Basset do after the episode?
- ~ Are the episodes alike?
- ~ Frequency and pattern