



Information on Seizure Disorders/Epilepsy

If seizure disorder or epilepsy is present, it may represent precautions or contraindications to therapeutic horseback riding.

Seizure disorders are a disruption of brain function manifested as impairment by loss of consciousness, abnormal motor activity or sensory disturbances. Seizures may arise as a primary disorder (e.g. epilepsy), or seizures may be secondary to brain insults (e.g. brain injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, disease, tumor). The severity of seizures ranges from extremely mild and barely noticeable, to moderate or severe with complete loss of control. Seizures may have specific triggers such as sounds, light or smells that precipitate the seizure activity. Frequency of seizures varies widely and cannot always be predicted. If a seizure disorder is noted on the Health or Medical History form, the Professional Association of Equi★Star should obtain additional information as to the following:

- Type of seizure
- Typical aura (pre-seizure sensations or behaviors)
- The typical motor activity during seizures
- The post-seizure behavior and duration
- The average duration of seizures
- The current frequency of seizures
- What to do should a seizure occur at the center

If the medical form indicates a history of seizures, Equi★Star will inquire as to how long it has been since the last seizure. The longer it has been since a seizure occurred, the less likely it will reoccur, but it can. Equi★Star will consult with the participant's MD to determine the likelihood of seizure recurrence, particularly if the seizure activity was of the atonic or drop kind.

Decisions against riding are based on the welfare of riders and equines as well as staff. All decisions are made on a case by case basis.

Precaution

- If the motor activity, change in postural tone, loss of motor control or alteration in consciousness is minor and is unlikely to frighten or injure the equine, participant or staff
- Seizure medications may cause drowsiness or photosensitivity (see medication)
- Sensitivity of the equine to seizure activity
- Availability of appropriate equine

Contraindication (inadvisable because of a likely adverse reaction)

- Recent seizure activity accompanied by strong, uncontrollable motor activity or atonic or drop attack seizures due to their sudden and complete loss of postural muscle tone
- A change of frequency of type of seizure until the condition is evaluated
- Inability to manage a participant during an emergency dismount should a seizure occur
- Unavailability of appropriate equine