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Swim England Policy

Epilepsy

The organisation recognises that exercise is of benefit to all, including people with epilepsy. Therefore, having this condition should not prevent participation in swimming. However, there is a need to take certain sensible precautions.

1. Any individual presenting with possible epilepsy should be investigated and have a diagnosis made before taking part in organised swimming or water sports.
2. Extra precautions need to be taken when there is a significant risk of further fits (seizures). In line with the recommendations of DVLA for Group 1 this period of significant risk is defined as follows:
 - For 1 year following a fit
 - Whilst reducing medication and for 6 months after stopping it
3. For swimmers, during training and competition, the swimmer should swim in an outside lane, and must be accompanied by a competent observer* appointed to act for him/her.
4. For divers, no diving above 1m will be allowed. They should also have a competent observer.
5. Water polo again requires a competent observer, with no particular restrictions.
6. Open water swimming is not to be recommended for the above period. The particular hazard of sudden immersion in cold water should be borne in mind.
7. Synchronised swimmers will require a competent observer. The practice of deliberate hyperventilation should be discouraged, as it is a known trigger factor for fits.
8. Flashing lights are another recognised trigger factor.

*A competent observer is someone who can recognize the particular seizure/fit in that individual and is able to take appropriate action.

This policy does not apply to classified disability swimmers as their activities are regulated through risk assessment.