

## Gerbil Suffers Possible Seizure

### Why would a gerbil have what appears to be a seizure?

*By Karen Rosenthal, DVM, DABVP*

Posted: August 27, 2009, 5 a.m. EDT

**Q:** I own three gerbils, bought in September 2008. My gerbils are kept in a gerbilarium and have been looked after to the best of my ability.

Today when cleaning out my gerbil cage, my gerbil Rizzle had what seemed to be a fit/seizure. Her ears went back, there was some slight shaking and her legs seemed parted. I tried not to involve myself, as I believed I could scare her more. When she started to lose balance and seemed unresponsive with half-closed eyes, I picked her up and stroked her, offering some water from a sipper. She seemed to respond and, after a few minutes, went back to exploring the cage.

Do you think this was a seizure common to gerbils, or do the symptoms of balance and loose legs with unresponsiveness seem different? I have kept an eye on my three gerbils for several hours now, and they all seem OK.

**A:** It does sound like a seizure. As you mentioned, seizures are something we associate with gerbils. It can be very common in certain lines. These seizures do not harm the gerbil but there is nothing you can do to prevent them. Some people believe that stress can bring on seizures in gerbils, so it does make sense for gerbils to have as perfect living conditions as you can set up for them.

It is not possible to know from your description if your gerbil has a disease other than seizures. If this happens again, take your gerbil to a veterinarian for an examination.

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