

The Safety Checklist for people living with epilepsy

Around the house

The Kitchen

- Consider a microwave instead of stove top or oven
- If using a stove use the back elements and turn pan handles away from the stove
- Consider a temperature controlled hot water service
- Serve hot dishes from a bench instead of carrying them to the table
- Use cordless electrical appliances with automatic switch off and appliances like food processors rather than using sharp knives
- Use rubber gloves when washing dishes
- Use non breakable crockery and have hot drinks in a mug with a lid
- If using a dishwasher place points and sharp objects down and close door when not in use
- Consider cupboards with recessed handles
- Minimise the use of knives; Consider buying pre sliced food

The Living Room

- Use fixed fireguards around a fireplace
- Consider round rather than square or rectangular coffee tables
- Use shatterproof glass for big windows
- For photosensitive seizures reduce the contrast of the television screen by turning on the lights in the room and sit at least 3 metres from the set. A quality TV (with 100hz refresh rate), LCD or plasma screens are also useful
- LCD screens for computers are flicker free and useful for people with photosensitive epilepsy

The Bathroom

- Consider a temperature controlled hot water service
- Always turn on cold water first
- Use a handheld shower attachment in the shower and in the bath if no shower available. Remember to leave the plug out.
- Consider shower curtains rather than a glass screen or in the case of a glass screen use reinforced glass
- Consider rubber backed mats
- Avoid the use of electrical appliances like hairdryers and electrical razors near water

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- Consider the use of a shower chair
- In the toilet an outward opening door is very important
- Toilet roll holder on the floor beside or behind the toilet may minimise injury if someone has a seizure while on the toilet.

The Bedroom

- Don't sleep on top bunk, use a low bed
- Consider tightly fitted sheets
- Sleep without a pillow or use a firm porous pillow
- Consider bed alarms or other monitor device

Generally around the home

- Install smoke alarms and minimise clutter
- You might want to consider walkways are clear before going to bed at night
- If electrical cords are a consideration, tape them to the floor
- Consider doors that are outward opening, sliding, half doors or doors that are easily removed
- Don't lock internal doors and if using a deadlock leave the key in the lock. Use security sets for bathrooms and toilets if needed. These can be unlocked from the outside if necessary
- Consider having safety switches in the metre box installed by an electrician
- Minimise sharp edges and corners
- Avoid living in accommodation with stairs or consider a safety gate at the top of the stairs
- Wear an identification bracelet or have information available in case of a seizure
- Keep medications out of reach of children. Store in a cool dry place and do not remove from pillbox or Webster pack ahead of time
- Push button phones can be programmed so that pushing a particular button after a seizure alerts a relative or friend that the person may need some help
- Minimise glass for example in doors, cupboards and table tops

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At School or Work

What safety considerations are needed?

- Have you informed someone that you have epilepsy?
- Are policies and procedures in place should a seizure occur?
- Does the school or workplace have a recovery room?
- Is an individual emergency plan necessary?
- Have guidelines with driving and use of machinery been understood?
- Does the workplace or school need some epilepsy education?

Leisure Activities and Playing Sport

- Never swim alone and while participating in water activities take a friend or carer
- Let a lifeguard know about your condition
- Wear lifejackets in boats and when fishing
- Avoid scuba diving and high board diving
- Avoid water that is too hot in spas and keep up fluids
- Always wear a helmet (this is law anyway) and use bike track/lanes where possible
- Whenever participating in an activity where a fall may be possible or it poses the risk of a head injury, use protective head gear
- Be aware of over exertion or over heating, drink plenty of water
- If possible try to choose activities that take place on softer surfaces such as grass, mats, etc.
- Consider if it is useful to have a gym buddy, if using weights, stationary equipment, etc.