

Safety around the home

This article is about how you help to reduce injuries and accidents caused by seizures. It is not necessary to put bubble wrap on every hard surface, it simply requires some thought and awareness.

Knowing Triggers

The best way to reduce risk of injury is to know when you are at your time of highest risk of seizure, and recognising your early warning signs. To give an example, some people with epilepsy are at their greatest risk of seizure when they first get up due to medication levels in their body being low. Knowing this is half the battle, from there, that person would know to be more alert to the presence of triggers, so they can react and reduce risk. If there is no pattern you can detect, maybe your neurologist could shed some light on what seems to be a trigger for you based on the information they have gathered through their testing and their professional knowledge. It can never hurt to ask.

Furniture

A good step you can take to reduce risk is to replace glass furniture such as tables and so on. Yes, other materials can do damage if you hit them whilst dropping during a seizure, but there is a good chance they will not shatter and cut you as badly as glass can.

Perhaps invest in a bed that is relatively low to the ground if night seizures are an issue for you. Or perhaps a bed with sides to help prevent falls out of bed.

Day to Day Safety

Day to day safety is about changing your behaviour and thinking to reduce risk.

Changes such as:

- Showering instead of bathing to reduce risk of accidental drowning in case of a seizure
- Not locking doors to rooms so if you have a seizure, the people in the house with you can reach you to assist.
- Not swimming in a swimming pool alone
- Not cooking food alone if it can be helped i.e. having someone in the house to move you away from ovens/stoves in case of seizure.
- Sitting away from heaters/fires
- Investing in a high quality computer monitor with a high screen refresh rate
- Sitting back from the television
- Getting a decent amount of sleep every night
- Letting people you live with, such as flatmates, know you have epilepsy

Not all of these steps are completely practical 100% of the time, and it is unfair to suggest you completely change your behaviours and your life to suit epilepsy, but at the end of the day a little change here and there could make a big difference.

Disclaimer:

This information is given to provide general information about epilepsy. It is not legal advice and no warranties or representations are given in relation to any legal information provided. Epilepsy Association of New Zealand, its employees and Trustees exclude any liabilities that may arise out of the use or misuse of any information provided. It is recommended that you consult independent legal advice from your lawyer. Medical information and knowledge changes rapidly and you should consult your doctor for more detailed information. This is not medical advice and you should not make any medication or treatment changes without consulting your doctor.