EPILEPSY NEW ZEALAND
Kia titiro ki te tangata | See the person

Bedroom

Being safe in the bedroom is particularly important for people who experience unpredictable and/or night time (nocturnal) seizures. Having a seizure during sleep can present some specific dangers, such as objects near the bed causing injury, suffocation due to a seizure occurring while face down, or prolonged seizures which are not recognised by others.

While rare, a small number of people living with epilepsy die from Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP), many of whom are found deceased in bed. While SUDEP is still being investigated, some research suggests that suffocation in bed may be a contributing factor.

Some tips which might increase safety in the bedroom, particularly if you are at risk of seizures during sleep:

- Consider using a low bed, mattress on the bed or a futon so that you are closer to the ground if you have a risk of falling out of bed.
- Consider placing pads on the floor beside the bed in case you roll out of bed.
- Keep furniture or dangerous objects away from your bedside.
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach.
- Soft pillows can present a suffocation risk, so consider using a safety pillow or firm foam pillow instead. Safety pillows have small holes which may assist you to breathe if you are face down during and after a seizure. Some people also choose to use firm foam pillows, or some choose to not use a pillow at all. Regardless, limit the number of pillows around you as these can get in the way during the night.
- Consider placing a monitor in your bedroom so that a person in the house can hear you during a seizure.
- Consider using a seizure alert or detection device during the night, or sleep periods, as these can assist in detecting movement during a seizure, breathing changes or a reduced weight on the bed (which may indicate a fall).

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