



Safety Checklist

Epilepsy is a common disorder of the brain in which a person has a tendency to have recurrent unprovoked seizures. Safety precautions should be sensible and relevant to the person, with a balance between risk and restrictions. Good seizure management can also reduce risk to the person.

Around the Home

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
- If using a dishwasher place points and sharp objects down & keep door closed
- Consider cupboards with recessed handles
- Minimise the use of large knives; consider buying pre sliced food

Living Room

- Use fixed fireguards around a fireplace
- Keep a one metre clear space around heaters. Place portable heaters in a stable, safe position away from clothing and bedding.
- Consider round rather than square or rectangular coffee tables
- Use candles and open flames with care
- 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

(See Photosensitive epilepsy fact sheet for extra information)

Bathroom

- Any changes to hot water systems must adhere to council bylaws
- Always turn on cold water before hot
- 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 using electrical appliances like hairdryers & electrical razors anywhere near water
- Consider the use of a shower chair
- In the toilet, an outward opening door is very important

Bedroom

- Don't sleep on top bunk, use a low bed
- Consider a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheets
- Sleep without a pillow or use a non-suffocating pillow
- Consider bed alarms or other monitor device if seizures are frequent during sleep.

And more generally

- Install smoke alarms and minimise clutter
- Clear walkways before going to bed at night
- Keep electrical cords taped 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 locks for bathrooms and toilets, which can be unlocked from the outside if, needed
- Have safety switches in the meter 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.

Cycling, swimming and water sports

- 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 your fluids
- Always wear a helmet and use bike track/lanes where possible

And more generally

- 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.

Work / school

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 Epilepsy Management Plan?
- Have guidelines to do with driving and use of machinery been understood?
- Does the workplace or school need updated epilepsy education?

Information reviewed by the Services Team January 2019. To be reviewed January 2022.

Although every effort has been made to ensure accurate and up to date information is provided, Epilepsy Queensland and its advisors cannot accept any liability in relation to the information provided. It is strongly recommended that you discuss any information with your doctor or other relevant organisations.