

Home Safety and Other Lifestyle Tips



Home Safety

First, you should know that every home has 2 main areas that can invite harm – *kitchen* and *bathroom*. After any seizure, people can become confused and risk injury. There are several things you can do to decrease the chance of accidents.

Kitchen

- Use oven mitts and cook only on rear burners.
- If possible, use an electric stove, so there is no open flame.
- Cook in a microwave, which is the safest option. Microwave cookbooks are available.
- Keep a cart in the kitchen. This lets you wheel food to the table, so you don't risk dropping hot food.
- Ask your plumber to install a heat-control device in your faucet so the water doesn't become too hot.
- Consider carpeting the kitchen floor. This can provide cushion if you fall.
- Use plastic containers rather than glass when possible.



Bathroom

- Install a device in your tub and shower head that controls temperature. This keeps you from burning yourself if a seizure should occur.
- Carpet the floor – it's softer and less slippery than tile.
- Do not put a lock on the bathroom door. If you have one, never use it. Someone should always be able to get in if you need help.
- Learn to bathe with only a few inches of water in the tub and use a hand-held shower head. If you have many seizures, bathe while someone is with you nearby.



Maintaining an Active Lifestyle

Generally, having epilepsy doesn't mean you can't take part in sports and activities with your neurologist's guidance. Remember, everyone is different. So, be sure to talk to your neurologist about your seizure control and how it might affect your ability to participate in sports and other activities.

Career

Many people with epilepsy work steady jobs and have successful careers. Having epilepsy should not prevent you from getting a job. However, the decision of whether or not to disclose your epilepsy to potential employers is something you should discuss with your neurologist.

Discrimination in employment is outlawed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336. This applies to private businesses with more than 15 employees. It supplements the Rehabilitation Act, which bans discrimination by federal contractors and agencies or recipients of federal financial assistance. As in any case, the person applying for the job must be qualified to do the work.



Drinking Alcohol

For some people with epilepsy, the occasional alcoholic drinks poses no problem. For others, alcohol can change the electrical activity in the brain and interact with epilepsy medications. The effect of alcohol may also vary depending on what type of medication you take. Everyone's different, so talk to your neurologist about how consuming alcohol may affect you. *And remember, heavy drinking can cause a seizure and should be avoided.*



Transportation

For many people with epilepsy, the risk of seizures restricts their independence, in particular the ability to drive. The Epilepsy Foundation offers a state-by-state database of each state's driving restrictions and regulations. Look up your state's regulations.

Depending on where you live, public transportation and carpooling may be options to explore. Given the increase in gas prices, you may find that friends and coworkers are more than willing to share the expense in exchange for a ride.



Staying Safe

It's a good idea to have medical information available in case you have a seizure when you're not accompanied by a friend or family member who knows you have epilepsy. You can fill in all of the appropriate information in your wallet and carry it with you everywhere.

You can also wear a medical alert bracelet to let people know about your epilepsy in case you experience a seizure.

