

Seizure Risk Reduction Strategies

Each person's epilepsy is different. This document may help you to ascertain what risk reduction strategies are appropriate for you, based on your lifestyle, level of seizure control and the level of risk you feel is appropriate for your unique situation. This is not an exhaustive list. Some people may find only some of these strategies are relevant, for others many of the strategies may be. No single risk reduction strategy should be taken in isolation, but should instead be one part of an overall risk reduction plan.

Key Strategies

- > Keep a seizure diary - Get to know your unique seizure triggers and work towards minimising your exposure to them
- > Consider using seizure alert technologies as one part of an overall risk reduction strategy
- > Ensure you get adequate sleep
- > Take your medications as prescribed
- > Avoid illicit substances and excess alcohol
- > Report your epilepsy to the relevant licensing authority and be aware of your responsibilities around driving
- > Have an up-to-date Epilepsy Management Plan and an Emergency Medication Management Plan if required
- > Maintain regular medical reviews and aim for zero seizures



Kitchen

- Consider the use of electric steamers/slow or thermo cookers to reduce the risk of burns
 - Only use the rear hotplates to reduce the risk of knocking pots and pans off the stove in the event of a seizure
- Consider the use of a microwave instead of an oven for cooking
- Use non-breakable crockery and serve from the counter rather than carrying hot dishes over to the table
- Consider using a cordless kettle that switches off automatically and has a lid that 'locks' shut to help prevent scalds
- Consider using a food processor instead of sharp knives
- Consider recessed handles for cupboards
- Thermal mugs with lids can help to protect you if you spill a hot drink during a seizure
- Induction cooktops that only heat up when a pan is in place, may help reduce the risk of burns



Bathroom

- Consider a shower curtain rather than a glass screen
 - Consider using a shower chair and hand-held shower head
- Use rubber backed nonslip mats in the bathroom and other wet areas
- Having a shower can be safer than having a bath because the water generally drains away. This can lower the risk of drowning if you have a seizure
- Never lock the bathroom door
- Do not bathe or use a spa bath alone
- Consider using an electric shaver instead of a razor
- A thermostat that sets a limit on the temperature of your hot water may help to reduce burns
- Doors that open outwards or both ways can make it easier for people to get to you if you require assistance
- Use a handheld shower attachment in the bath if there is no shower available and you are alone. Remember to leave the plug out.



Bedroom

- Using a low-level bed or mattress on the floor may lower the risk of injury from a fall
- Some people who have nocturnal seizures use safety or 'anti-suffocation' pillows. However, there is no definitive evidence that they prevent suffocation
- There are special bed types available too, like the "Safety Sleeper"
- Consider a firm mattress with a tightly fitted bottom sheet
- Sleeping in the middle of a large bed may reduce the risk of falling out of bed during a seizure



Living Area

- Keep your living areas at a comfortable temperature
- If you are affected by flashing lights, consider using anti-glare covers or an LCD screen for televisions and computers with a 100hz refresh rate
- Reduce contrast by turning lights on when watching television or using the computer
- Take regular breaks when watching TV or using a computer and do not sit too near to the screen
- Avoid clutter and furniture with sharp edges
- Consider shatterproof safety glass for large windows
- Place fire guards around open fires and avoid free standing heaters



Tools and Machinery

- Avoid the use of high ladders
- Use power tools with safety cut out functions
- Using a circuit breaker can help protect against the risk of electrocution
- Use safety control buttons to lock equipment. Inspect equipment for proper function and loose parts
- Use battery operated power tool instead of corded mains power tools
- Using artificial grass means that there is no need to use a lawn mower

Other Considerations



- Make your treating doctor/pharmacist aware of any other medications/supplements you are taking in case of an interaction
- Do not switch brands of medication or alter your dosage without first checking with your treating doctor
- Avoid swimming alone and if in a patrolled area inform the lifeguard of your epilepsy
- Avoid higher risk water activities such as scuba diving and high board diving
- Install and test smoke detectors & carbon monoxide detectors as recommended
- For people with photosensitive epilepsy, if you are suddenly exposed to a trigger, covering one eye completely with your hand may help reduce the photosensitive effect
- Stay well back from the road/curb when waiting for public transport
- Using a tumble dryer may reduce the need for ironing
- Wear a medic-alert bracelet or similar
- See your treating doctor well in advance of planning a family, to ensure you are on the best treatment plan for your situation
- Minimise the use of furniture with sharp edges or corners when furnishing your home
- Use memory aids such as Webster Packs or phone reminders to help you to remember to take your medication
- If you have photosensitive epilepsy avoid prolonged exposure to fluorescent lighting
- Arrange regular visits and phone calls from family or friends if living alone
- Consider the use of protective headwear in case of convulsive or drop seizures where appropriate
- Wear an approved life jacket for activities such as boating or fishing
- Adopt self-care strategies and look after your mental health as well as your physical health
- Always wear a helmet when riding a bike, scooter, horse, or skateboard
- Going up stairs using your hands and feet and coming down stairs on your bottom may reduce the risk of injury if a seizure happens, using lifts where available, may be helpful too
- Doors that open both ways, or outwards, can make access easier in an emergency
- Consider seizure forecasting and other apps, such as the Seer Health app, if you find them useful in helping to better manage your epilepsy
- Ensure your loved-ones, teachers and carers have been trained in seizure first aid and emergency medication administration if relevant and that they have a copy of your Epilepsy Management Plans