

A Seizure Safe Environment



Depending on the type of seizure, people may fall or hurt themselves in a variety of ways. Cuts, burns, bumps, and bruises can happen. More serious injuries can happen too, especially if someone falls and is not aware of what's going on around them.

Here are some general tips that can help lessen your risk of injury. First talk to your health care provider about your type of seizures and risks. Then look at where you are when a seizure may happen and what risks are present in your home, work, school, or play area. Look at your lifestyle too. For example, what types of activities do you like to do? Then look at the following tips and see what makes sense to keep you safe and prevent injuries or accidents.

Home safety

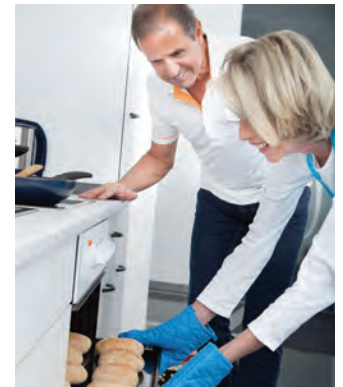
Prevent drowning and injuries from slips and falls in the bathroom:

- Take showers instead of baths.
- Leave the bathroom door unlocked. Make sure someone is close by in case you have a seizure while showering.
- Hang the bathroom door so it opens out, not in. This way someone can get in easily if you need help.
- Use safety glass for mirrors and shower doors.



Take care when cooking:

- Get pre-sliced foods so you don't need to use knives when alone.
- Use the microwave instead of a stovetop when you're home alone.
- If you use a stovetop, use back burners to prevent spilling hot foods.
- Wear long thick oven mitts to take food out of the oven.
- Try not to carry hot dishes. Try sliding them along a counter or use a cart.
- Use cups with lids for hot drinks.
- Use non-breakable dishes, cups, and cookware.



Stay safe from burns and fires:

- Make sure someone is nearby when you use the stove, grills, or fireplace.
- Iron clothes or light candles only when someone is with you.
- Look for appliances that have automatic shut-off switches.
- Put guards in front of radiators, heaters, and fireplaces. Only use space heaters that can't tip over.
- Check your smoke alarms once a month by pushing the test button.

Keep yourself safe while sleeping:

- Sleep in a bed that is low to the floor if you have seizures at night.
- Consider using a seizure alert device so someone can hear if you have a seizure.
- If you have shaking movements during a seizure, move your bed away from furniture or the wall so you don't injure yourself during a seizure.
- Sleep on your back or side; avoid sleeping face down.

Prevent injuries from falls:

- Pick up or put away things you could trip over, like cords, toys, or shoes.
- Store things you use often where you can reach them easily.
- Put padding on furniture with sharp edges or buy furniture with rounded or soft edges.
- Install soft flooring, like carpets with thick padding.
- Use soft “outdoor carpeting” on hard surfaces like stairs or a deck.

Work safely outside:

- Use a lawn mower that stops when you let go of the handle.
- Make sure that power tools have safety guards and will stop running if you let go.
- Always wear protective eyewear, footwear, and gloves.

Safety and parenting

You have seizures and you have a child. How is this going to work? You can't help but wonder, “What happens if I have a seizure while taking care of the baby?”

This is a normal question and one you should talk about with your loved ones and health care team. Then develop a plan to make your home safe for your family and try these simple parenting tips to make life easier.

Remember, what you need to do may vary with the type and number of seizures you have, so talk about these ideas with your doctor or nurse. If you have frequent seizures, especially with loss of awareness, consider having someone help while you care for your baby.



- When childproofing your house like all parents do, take an extra step. Get down on the floor and think what would happen if you fall. What could hurt you or your baby?
- Sit in the middle of the bed, on the couch, or on the floor when holding or feeding your baby.
- Change, dress, and sponge bathe the baby using a portable changing pad on the floor.
- Strap the baby snugly into a stroller with breaks or an infant seat when you feed him.
- When home alone, use a playpen or play yard with doors and gate. If you don't feel well, put the baby down in this enclosed area.
- Keep baby supplies on each level of the home to avoid climbing stairs.
- Don't carry hot fluids or dangerous items near the baby.
- If your seizures are sensitive to sleep deprivation, use help to feed the baby at night.
- Always keep your epilepsy medicine (and other medicines) where children can not reach them.
- When walking outside with a child who can wander, consider using a safety harness to keep your child close in case you have a seizure.
- If you feel a warning or seizure, lie down on your side on a soft surface.
- Carry a cell phone with you, even in the house, to call for help if needed.

Telling children about seizures

One day, as your child grows, she may ask about your seizures. Use simple language to explain things. Say that you will be okay but that you may need some help sometimes. Show him how to get another adult to help or to call 911 if you do not wake up after a seizure. If you are calm, your child will be too. As your child gets older, he will have more questions for you. Use age appropriate information to teach your family about seizures and how they can help.

This publication is designed to provide general information about epilepsy and seizures to the public. It is not intended as medical advice. People with epilepsy should not make changes to treatment or activities based on this information without first consulting with their health care provider. This publication is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under cooperative grant agreement number 1NU58DP006256-01-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the CDC.