

Safety at Home



Like everyone, people with epilepsy live in a variety of settings; with family or friends, on their own, in share houses or in supported accommodation. Everyone, not just those who live with epilepsy, face risks in the home. However, as home is the most common place for seizure-related events and incidents, some people living with epilepsy may be at higher risk of accidents.

Generally, your seizure type and frequency will influence any strategies you decide to make your home a safer environment. The unpredictability of seizures and the impact of AEDs, which can impair your balance and awareness, may also affect any strategies or changes you put in place.

These changes may include home modifications, use of protective devices or having assistance nearby in the event of a seizure. This is not always possible for everyone, making it worthwhile considering different strategies or tools that would best suit you and your specific living situation. If you care for someone with epilepsy, whether you are a family member or support worker, it's a good idea to consider strategies that best suit your situation also.

If you are concerned about safety in the home, consider talking to your doctor or even have an assessment conducted by an occupational therapist, as this can help you to identify and mitigate risks in your living environment. This is something that can be organised through your [NDIS](#) plan, if applicable.

MANAGING RISKS IN THE HOME

Any home presents risks, but for someone living with epilepsy, some thought should be put into making it as safe as possible.

It's a good idea to have strategies put in place so that someone can enter your home should you have a seizure and they can't easily get in. Key lock safes are a secure method of authorising entry

to your home, without you having to leave keys under the doormat or risk issuing keys to people you don't know. They are also handy in case you lose or forget your own keys. Key lock boxes can be padlock or wall-mounted safe styles and are available for purchase from most hardware stores or lock specialists.

Taking into consideration the type of seizure activity you experience, some of the following tips might also be useful:

- Use of carpet or soft flooring, as opposed to a hard surface, may reduce the risk of injury should you fall.
- Avoid cluttering your home with too much furniture, as having more space to fall down without bumping into furniture can reduce the risk of injury.
- Use protective plastic or padded covers on handles, corners of furniture, benches and fittings – take a 'rounded house' approach.
- Avoid use of rugs as these can lead to trips or slips.
- Avoid glass dining tables or coffee tables.
- Ensure that mirrors are made of shatter-proof glass.
- Only use electrical equipment, such as hairdryers or electric razors, away from water sources.
- Use a solid and firm fireguard if you use an open fireplace.