

## SAFETY TIPS

### How can I remember to take my epilepsy medications?

Taking your medications properly is very important in treating your epilepsy. It is important not to skip doses and to establish a schedule you can remember and stick with. A few tips for sticking with your epilepsy medication schedule are:

- *Fill a pillbox with a week's epilepsy medication.* If at the end of the week you have leftover pills, you know you missed a few doses and can correct that pattern. Keep the pill box out of children's reach
- *Leave yourself notes.* Write reminders in your day planner or put sticky notes on your refrigerator or medicine cabinet—anywhere you will see them
- *Program electronic alerts.* Program your digital watch, cell phone, or e-mail program to alert you to take your epilepsy medication
- *Make an entry into your seizure diary every time you take your medication.* Medication schedule worksheets (as well as seizure logging forms) are available at [www.seizuretracker.com](http://www.seizuretracker.com).

### How can I safeguard my kitchen?

Every home has at least two main areas that can invite harm—the kitchen and bathroom. During or after some seizures, people can become confused and risk injury. There are several things you can do to decrease the chance of accidents.

In the 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, the safest option. Microwave cookbooks are available
- Keep a cart in the kitchen that will allow you to 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 that the water doesn't become too hot
- Consider carpeting the kitchen floor. This can provide a cushion if you fall
- Use plastic containers rather than glass whenever possible.

### How can I safeguard my bathroom?

- Install a device in your tub and shower head that controls temperature. This will keep you from burning yourself should a seizure occur
- Carpet the floor—carpet is softer and less slippery than tile
- Do not put a lock on the bathroom door. If you have one, don't use it. Someone should always be able to get in if you need help

- Use non-skid strips in tub or shower and install tub rails or grab bars
- Use protective covers on faucet handles, nozzles, and countertop edges to help cushion falls and reduce injuries
- Use electric razors rather than blades to avoid cuts
- Install the bathroom door to swing outward to allow entry into the room in case of a fall against the door
- Keep electrical equipment such as hair dryers, radios, razors away from water sources.

### **Can I participate safely in physical activities?**

You can play sports with epilepsy. Some studies have shown that physical activity can decrease seizure activity. However, it's a good idea to have someone with you who knows how to manage a seizure. Wearing head protection is also recommended when participating in a contact sport that can result in falling or hitting your head.

Here are some examples of physical activities that can be enjoyed by individuals living with epilepsy:

- Contact sports including football, hockey and soccer (wear a helmet and tell the coach about your epilepsy)
- Water sports and swimming if seizures are well controlled and supervision is present
- Check with your neurologist before starting any new exercise program.

Some activities are inappropriate for people with uncontrolled seizures:

- Swimming alone
- Scuba diving
- Climbing to unsafe heights.