

7 Epilepsy: Balancing Risk and Safety

Accidents happen with or without epilepsy.

However, there are additional risks for people with epilepsy.

An assessment of risk and safety is best made from a position of information and knowledge.

High Risk Factors

Seizures - severe
intractable (continue in spite of medication)
unpredictable
no warning
frequent falls
clusters of seizures.

Additional neurological disorders—dementia, head injury, learning disability

Side effects of high dose of antiepileptic drugs

double vision
tiredness
sleepiness
dizziness
poor memory.

Additional physical disabilities

poor eye sight
joint and muscle inflexibility
heart and circulation problems.

Anxiety, depression

Smoking and alcohol related accidents

Danger areas—home, school, workplace, leisure, travel.

How can a balanced view be achieved?

- Know your seizure pattern (see Leaflet 3 'Recording Seizures').
- Know why, when, where and how you may face risk.
- Decide the degree of supervision you need.
- Adapt your environment wherever necessary.
- Adapt equipment where necessary.



Minimising Risk Factors

Accurate epilepsy diagnosis

Appropriate treatment by an epilepsy specialist

Regular review of treatment plans

Good understanding of epilepsy

Support of family/friends/GP

Ensuring best possible health (See leaflet 5 'Treatment for Epilepsy')

Carry ID card or wear ID bracelet

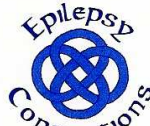
Support dogs—consider where appropriate.

10 Basic Safety Points

- Ensure floor coverings are fixed, e.g. non-slip rugs.
- Provide adequate lighting on stairs and landings.
- Choose sturdy furniture—avoid sharp corners and clutter.
- Provide sufficient power points - avoid trailing flexes—use equipment fitted with safety cut-outs.
- Use toughened safety glass in windows and doors.
- Firmly fix fireguards and radiator covers—lag any hot exposed pipes.
- Keep medication clearly labelled and securely stored.
- Install and regularly test smoke and other safety alarms.
- Keep an up-to-date emergency contact list near the phone with a note describing your seizures and treatment.
- Keep a well-maintained First Aid Box to hand.

(See also leaflets 'Safety in the Home', 'Safety in School, College and University', 'Safety at Work', 'Safety in Sport', 'Epilepsy: Leisure and Pleasure—Safety Issues'.

This is one of a series of information leaflets available to download from our website for personal use only, subject to the Terms and Conditions for use of our site, which are shown on our Home Page.



Supporting people with epilepsy

Epilepsy Connections

Head Office: 100 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6DH
Phone: 0141.248.4125 Fax: 0141.248.5887

Forth Valley Epilepsy Connections Fieldwork Office
Project: Estates Corridor
Falkirk Community Hospital
Major's Loan
Falkirk FK1 5QE
Phone: 01324 624000, Ext 6022

Email: info@epilepsyconnections.org.uk
Website: www.epilepsyconnections.org.uk

Epilepsy Connections is a company limited by guarantee and Registered in Scotland No: 212813. Registered Office 109 Douglas Street, Glasgow G2 4HB. Recognised as a Scottish Charity. No: SC030677



Supporting people with epilepsy

Updated March 2008. © Epilepsy Connections September 2005. Content validated by Forth Valley NHS Board

