

# Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

*Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.*

If you have epilepsy or certain other conditions, you may experience seizures from time to time. Some people experience them more frequently than others. Modern treatment methods, such as medication or surgery, may help minimize the frequency and severity of your seizures.

Medical treatments are not the only tools used to manage epilepsy and other conditions that can cause seizures. You also need to take steps to protect yourself against injury if you experience a seizure. It is important to improve the safety of places you frequent, including your home, office, and other environments.

Learn how to make the world around you safer for yourself or a loved one who has seizures.

## **Stay safe at home**

Whether you are eating, sleeping, or entertaining, you probably spend a lot of time in your home. To make your home a safer place:

- Replace glass in doors, windows, showers, and other spaces with safety glass or plastic. If you have a seizure and fall through glass, you can cut yourself severely.
- Keep interior doors unlocked. Loved ones and emergency personnel may have difficulty reaching you if you have a seizure behind a locked door.
- Take showers instead of baths. You have an increased risk of drowning in a bathtub during a seizure.
- Do not use electrical appliances near water. In the event of a seizure, you might drop the appliance into water and electrocute yourself.
- Use caution with hot items, which could burn you in the case of a seizure. For example, avoid carrying pots of hot water or food, and ask for assistance when possible.
- Make sure that pan handles are facing toward the back of your stove while you are cooking. If you have a seizure, you may accidentally hit a forward-facing handle and spill hot food on your body.
- Cover fireplaces with safety glass. Avoid using space heaters that can be easily turned over.
- Only use motorized power tools that have safety switches. Machines with safety switches will stop on their own if you have a seizure and let go of the switch.

## **Stay safe in your workplace**

Each job presents its own set of challenges if you experience seizures. Office jobs may not require as many precautions as factory jobs. But no matter where you work, these tips may help:

- Tell your manager, human resources representative, and workplace nurse about your condition. Let them know how they can help if you have a seizure.

- Inform a trusted colleague of your condition so they can help care for you in the event of a seizure. It may also help to designate an emergency contact, such as your spouse, who they can call for support.
- Use caution while completing workplace responsibilities. For example, always wear appropriate protective gear and avoid jobs that put you in contact with open flames or heat sources, such as welding torches.

### **Stay safe during exercise**

Physical activity and exercise are very important to your overall health. You can maintain an active lifestyle, even if you have seizures. Just be sure to implement the following precautions:

- Wear a medical alert bracelet. If you have a seizure in an unfamiliar place, a medical alert bracelet can help emergency responders identify your condition and treat you appropriately.
- Introduce yourself to the staff at your local gym, recreation center, or pool. Let them know about your condition and explain how they can help in the event of a seizure.
- Only swim in bodies of water that are attended by a lifeguard. If no lifeguard is present, swim with a buddy who can help you during a seizure.
- Talk to your doctor before beginning any contact sports. They may encourage you to avoid certain sports or wear appropriate safety gear, such as a helmet and protective pads.
- Wear a helmet while biking, skiing, horseback riding, hiking, or participating in other activities where you could fall and hit your head.

Be aware of the risks. Consider avoiding activities that could be dangerous to you or another person if you were to have a moment of inattentiveness during a seizure.

### **Stay safe at school**

If your child has epilepsy, work with their school to make sure they are well cared for during school hours. Before the start of each school year, meet with your child's school nurse, administrators, and teachers. Discuss their needs and any concerns you have.

If your child's seizures are well controlled, they may not need much assistance from their school. But it is important to discuss what school staff can do if your child has a seizure. You should also share emergency contact information for you or another trusted member of your family's circle.

It may also help to:

- Buy a medical alert bracelet for your child to wear at all times. Many companies now make kid-friendly options.
- Educate your child about their condition, how they can protect themselves, and where they can get help when they need it. Encourage them to share their questions and concerns with you.
- Talk to your child's counselor at school and help them develop a relationship with your child and family. Children with epilepsy are more likely to experience depression, low self-esteem, and bullying because of their condition.
- Provide a helmet for your child to wear during physical education classes and recess. This can help protect them from head injuries during a seizure.

**The takeaway**

If you have epilepsy or another condition that can cause seizures, ask your doctor to help you develop an appropriate treatment plan. They may recommend medications, surgery, dietary changes, or other strategies to reduce the frequency or severity of your seizures.

It is also important to lower your risk of injury during a seizure. Take steps to minimize hazards, such as glass and sources of heat, in your home, work, exercise, and school environments. Let supervisors, staff, and trusted peers know about your condition and how they can help if you have a seizure. And adjust your habits as needed to keep yourself safe.

*Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.*

Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

[Steve.Hutton@epilepsy-ohio.org](mailto:Steve.Hutton@epilepsy-ohio.org)