



Fall Prevention Checklist

The two major causes of falls are health related changes (such as certain medications, slow reflexes, poor eyesight and balance problems) and dangerous situations in the home (including slippery floors, poor lighting, electrical wires and cords in pathways, loose rugs, raised thresholds and clutter.)

Most falls occur in bathrooms, bedrooms and on stairs. Use this checklist to help minimize the risk of falls in your home.

Approach to House

- Park close to your door.
- Be sure there is a clear pathway from the car to the door.
- Make sure the surface of the pathway is smooth and does not have cracks.
- Make sure there is a good light to show you the way to the door.
- If you have stairs, are the handrails steady and secure?
- Is the door wide enough to get through without straining?
- Make sure the door is easy to open and close.
- Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or uneven.

Living Room

- Is the seating adequate and safe?
- Can you get in and out of the furniture easily.
- Be sure the pathways are clear of electrical wires, clutter or cords.
- Be sure you have adequate lighting in the room.
- Be sure light switches are easy to reach and are at the entrance to the room.
- Make sure you have the telephone near and access to turn the television off and on without getting up from your chair.
- If you have floor rugs, remove them and wear non-slip, low heeled shoes or slippers with rubber grip.

Kitchen

- Is the seating adequate and safe?
- Be sure there is good lighting both in the room and in the work areas.
- Move the items you use most often to shelves that you can easily reach without a step stool.
- Do not use a step stool. Ask someone to help you if you must reach for something.
- Are your appliances in good condition and accessible?

Bedroom

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it is easy to reach without getting out of bed.
- Be sure the path from the bed to the bathroom is clear of clutter and is lit by a nightlight.
- Put a nightlight in the bedroom and hallways.
- Remove any floor rugs.
- Have the telephone close to the bed so you can reach it without getting out of bed.
- Have the television remote near the bed to avoid getting up to turn it on and off.

Bathroom

- Clear the pathway to the bathroom of any clutter, wires or cords.
- Be sure to turn the lights on when you enter.
- Do you have grab bars in the shower, tub and toilet areas? If not, have these installed.
- Remove any bathroom area rugs.
- Use non-slip adhesive strips or bath mats with strong suction grip.
- Consider sitting on a chair or stool in the shower.
- Use an elevated toilet seat to make it easier to sit and stand.
- Is there a telephone in the bathroom close to floor or is safety device worn during showering?

Stairs and Steps

- Pick up things on stairs such as books, shoes, laundry or other objects.
- Be sure the stairway is well lit.
- Have glowing light switches installed at the top and bottom of the stairwell.
- Repair any broken or loose steps.
- Repair any broken or loose handrails.
- Paint a brightly colored strip on the top and bottom steps.

General Safety

- Do you have smoke detectors in place?
- Use helping devices such as walkers or canes if necessary.
- Store items you use often on the counter or in an easy to reach drawer.
- Wear skid-free shoes.
- Keep a flash light with a fresh battery in the bedroom, kitchen and living room in case of loss of power.
- Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Have your hearing and eyesight checked. Inner ear problems can affect balance and vision problems make it difficult to see potential fall hazards.
- Exercise regularly to improve balance, flexibility, strength and overall well-being.
- If you feel dizzy, sit down and allow enough time for the dizziness to clear. Stand up slowly and hold onto something steady.
- If a step stool is absolutely necessary, use one with high and steady handrails. Do not use wobbly stools or chairs to reach things.
- Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help- in case you fall and can't get up.
- Be aware that alcohol affects your balance

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