

Home Safety for Older Adults

Everyone needs to pay attention to home safety issues. But as we age, safety issues become more important than ever. Here are some simple things to help keep your home or the home of a loved one safe.

Safety matters.

- ✓ Older adults often find their vision, hearing, memory or strength isn't what it used to be. These changes can put a person at risk for accidental injury.
- ✓ Older adults living alone may have difficulty getting help if they become ill or injured.
- ✓ A review of home safety and emergency plans may help prevent a serious injury.



Prevent falls.

- ✓ Remove or secure tripping hazards like small rugs and telephone cords.
- ✓ Keep the floor and stairways free of clutter.
- ✓ Be sure the home has good lighting, especially the stairways.
- ✓ Wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles.
- ✓ Always use handrails on stairs. Check to see that all handrails are firmly attached and run the entire length of the stairway.
- ✓ Use a non-slip mat in the shower or tub.
- ✓ Install grab bars in the shower or tub and next to the toilet.
- ✓ Be sure to get regular eye exams, as poor vision can lead to a fall.



Prevent fire-related injury.

- ✓ Never smoke in bed. Do not leave candles unattended.
- ✓ Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in or near bedrooms. Change the batteries as required.
- ✓ For those with limited hearing, use an alarm that combines sound, strobe lights or vibrations.
- ✓ Avoid loose-fitting or long-sleeved clothing when using the stove.
- ✓ Keep space heaters away from flammable materials. Keep the furnace in good working order.

Stay safe outdoors.

- ✓ Be sure all entrances to the house are well lit and all stairs have handrails.
- ✓ Be sure pathways and decks have non-slip surfaces.
- ✓ Keep pathways free of clutter, ice, snow and leaves.
- ✓ If you cannot keep up with outside clean-up, consider hiring someone to help. Or ask a neighbor or family member for help.

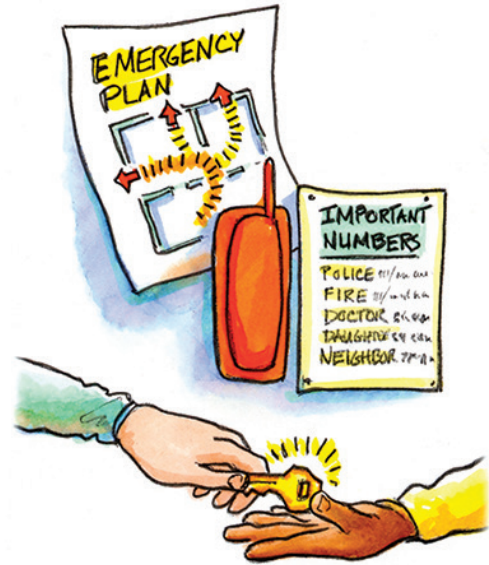


Be safe with medications.

- ✓ Ask your doctor to review all medications. Some medications can cause a person to feel lightheaded or dizzy, which can lead to a fall.
- ✓ Be sure all medications are clearly labeled. Take your medication exactly as prescribed.
- ✓ Ask your doctor to advise you about alcohol and your medications. Drinking alcohol with certain medications can be dangerous.

Be prepared – just in case!

- ✓ Consider a personal medical alert system. This device can be worn around the wrist or as a necklace. In an at-home emergency, you push a button and it will dial your phone for help.
- ✓ Consider keeping a cell phone with you.
- ✓ Post all emergency numbers near every phone.
- ✓ Plan and practice a fire drill. Map out emergency escape routes.
- ✓ Be sure all locks on doors are in working order and easy to use.
- ✓ Give a house key to a trusted friend or neighbor who can check on you or your loved one if needed.



If you have concerns about safety in your home or the home of someone you care for, ask your doctor for a home health visit referral to evaluate home safety.

For more information visit

www.eldercare.acl.gov



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