

IN-HOME SAFETY CHECK

Things you can do to reduce your risk of falling

Instructions:

Review the following questions carefully. For best results, correct the items you have checked off. Helpful hints to help you reduce your risk of falling are included. Always remember — falls are preventable!

Do you have:

- Unsafe stairs?
- Broken or worn steps?
 - Repair broken or worn steps. Keep them free of clutter.
- Broken or missing railings?
 - Repair or install handrails on stairs, if possible.
- Poor lighting?
 - Good lighting on stairs can reduce your chance of falling. Add bright strips of tape to the edge of each stair where you do not step. They can help you see the stairs better.
 - Consider adding night-lights where overhead lighting is lacking.
 - A night light in the bathroom can also make night trips to the bathroom easier.
 - Always keep a charged flashlight near your bed for emergencies.
- Throw rugs?
 - They are a tripping hazard. If you do not wish to remove them, they should be securely fastened with an adhesive, double-stick tape.
- Clutter?
 - Shoes, electrical cords, and magazines can be hazardous in walkways. Always keep walkways clear.
- Regularly used items out of reach?
 - Put regularly used items on shelves within easy reach between hip and eye level.
 - A long-handled grabber can be used to reach objects that are on high shelves or on the floor.

Do you have:

- Spills that go un-wiped?
 - Spills on the floor can be dangerous. It is best to wipe up spills as soon as they happen.

- A slippery bathroom floor, bathtub, or shower?
 - Always use a non-skid bathtub/shower mat.
 - If you bathe in the shower, consider installing a non-skid shower chair and hand-held shower head so you can sit while bathing.
 - Avoid pulling up on the sink to get up from the toilet or bathtub. Bathroom sinks are generally not securely fastened to the wall or floor, and are not intended to support your weight.
 - Install grab bars or handrails in the shower, on the walls around the bathtub, and alongside the toilet, where necessary.

- Furniture that is difficult to get in and out of?
 - Try to sit on furniture with good back support that you can get into and out of easily. Firm chairs with arm rests are easier to get out of. Add pillows to the back of the chair so your feet can touch the floor.

- A phone that is not accessible?
 - In case you trip and fall, help is only a phone call away. Keep emergency numbers readily available.

Safety tip: Change the batteries in your smoke detector when you change your clock for daylight savings time.

Please note: This brochure does not include all potential causes of falls. It is a starting point. Contact your doctor or health provider if you have further questions, or need help with making changes.

This brochure was developed by S.A.F.E. (Students Against Falls in the Elderly), Roberta Newton Ph.D. Temple University.

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