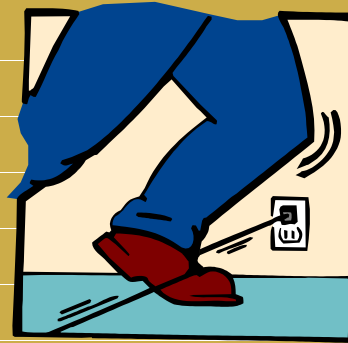
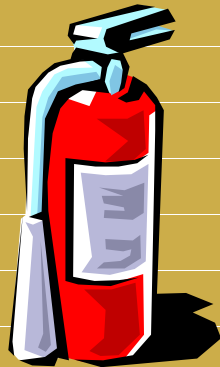


Home Safety for Seniors




stayput[™]
seniors

Special Report

HOME SAFETY FOR SENIORS

Including Checklist for Prevention of Falls in Your Home

General

- Consider a medical alert or buddy system
- Have family and neighbours phone numbers readily available or preferably added to speed dial
- Keep a fire extinguisher and/or fire blanket in the kitchen and on every floor of multi-level homes
- Install smoke detectors in every room and monitor regular battery replacement
- Use extreme caution when smoking and never smoke in bed
- Always get up slowly after sitting or lying down – take your time, and make sure you have your balance
- Wear proper fitting shoes with low heels
- Use a correctly measured walking aid
- Convert wall phones to bench/table locations and have at least one phone in the home that can be reached from the floor
- Choose appliances with large, easy-to-use buttons, or touch panels
- Remove scatter rugs or secure by fixing to floor surface
- Avoid using slippery wax on floors
- Wipe up floor spills promptly
- Remove electrical or telephone cords from traffic areas
- Avoid standing on ladders or chairs
- Use only non-glare bulbs
- Choose touch lamps rather than those with traditional on-off switches
- Replace door knobs with lever handles
- Ensure staircases have good lighting with switches at top and bottom
- Have sturdy rails for all stairs inside and outside the home
- Staircase steps should have a non-slip surface
- Beware of selecting a carpet pattern that camouflages the edges of steps
- Extra care is required when using steps and stairs. Always grasp the railing firmly and keep an eye out for:-
 - a single step (people often trip with only one step)
 - obstacles
 - non-uniform height and width
 - thick or poorly secured mats

Bathroom

- Leave a light on in your bathroom/toilet at night
- Use recommended bath aids e.g. shower chair
- Ensure grab rails are securely installed
- Skid-proof the bath and use a non-slip bath mat
- To avoid scalds, turn water heater to 55 degrees C or below
- Replace traditional grab/turn taps with lever taps
- Mark cold and hot taps clearly
- Use door locks that can be opened from both sides
- If possible, bathe when help is available

Kitchen

- Keep floors clean and uncluttered
- Illuminate work areas
- Mark "on" and "off" positions on appliances clearly and with bright colour
- Store sharp knives in a rack
- Use a kettle with an automatic shut off
- Store heavier objects at waist level
- Store hazardous items separate from food
- Avoid wearing long, loose clothing when cooking over the stove

Drug Safety

- Review your medicines frequently with your doctor or pharmacist and when you take new medication
- Make sure your medicines are clearly labeled
- Read medicine labels in good light to ensure you have the right medicine and always take the correct dose
- Dispose of any old or used medicines
- Never borrow prescription drugs from others
- Check with your Doctor or Chemist before you mix alcohol and your drugs or before mixing non-prescription drugs and prescription drugs
- Have medication dispensed in a bubble pack available from Chemists

Outside

- Avoid using a ladder by assigning the task to someone younger. However if you must use a ladder, follow these rules:-
 - When using an extension ladder, keep the base of the ladder firm, ladder feet on level ground, and the ladder angled against the wall properly
 - Face the ladder when climbing, and hold onto rungs firmly. If reaching, keep your hips and body weight centered between the rails
 - When using a step ladder, make sure both spreaders are firmly locked
 - Don't stand or sit on a stepladder's top shelf
 - Never climb on the back of a singled-sided stepladder as this is not designed to carry a person's weight
 - Use a ladder that is the right length for the task you are doing
 - Don't climb beyond the second step from the top of a stepladder, and the fourth rung from the top of an extension ladder
- Clean spills or slippery surfaces in garages immediately, before walking on them – especially oil or grease on cement floors
- Keep sheds and garages as clutter free as possible, with clear walking access
- Store poisons, fertilisers etc in their original containers
- Discard unlabelled containers
- Install remote control doors to garages where possible

Checklist for Prevention of Falls in Your Home

ALL ROOMS	✓
Carpet has short, dense pile	
Double-sided carpet tape applied to rugs to prevent slip	
Furniture arranged for ease of movement around the room	
Electrical and extension cords are not in walking path	
Lights can be turned on without having to walk through dark areas	
Nightlights installed	
Exits and hallways are clear	
Stable chairs with armrests in use	
Bright, evenly distributed light in use	
Window shades installed to reduce glare	
Light switches are easy to access, especially when entering a room	
More than one phone in the home	
At least one phone can be reached from the floor	

STAIRS	✓
Handrails placed at correct height and on both sides of steps	
Light switches have large, easy-to-reach buttons	
Light switches are installed at the top and bottom of stairs	
Steps are even	
Non-carpeted stairs have non-skid treatment	
Carpeting is firmly attached along stairs	
Repairs carried out to worn or loose carpet	
Scatter rugs removed from the top and/or bottom of stairways	
Good lighting	
Stairs are clear of all objects including decorative items	

KITCHEN	✓
Stepstool is sturdy and in good working order	
Cords to appliances are well placed and not a tripping hazard	
Heavy objects not stored overhead	
Cooking area is free of clutter and fire hazards	
Floor surface is free from mats and in good repair	
Area is well illuminated	

BATHROOM	✓
Rubber bathmats or non-slip strips in bathtubs and showers	
Grab rails in the shower and bath	
Shower seat	
Hand-held shower head installed	
Access to door lock available from both inside and outside	
Hand mirrors are manufactured from non-shatter/safety glass	
Nightlight installed	

TOILET	✓
Grab rails and seat raiser installed	
Access to door lock available from both inside and outside	
Door hinges allow outward and inward opening	
Nightlight installed	
Non-slip mat utilised (or no mat)	
Toilet roll installed at correct height	