

SAFEGUARDING YOUR HOME AGAINST ACCIDENTS

Take a careful look at your home to identify possible hazards. Then take an active role in making your home safer. Check for safety hazards at the homes your child visits, for example:

A stairway, an open window, or a slick floor can lead to a fall.

- Use baby gates on stairs and latches on windows.
- Use secure straps in highchairs and on changing tables.
- Don't let your child climb on chairs, dressers, shelves, and step stools.

Take steps to keep your children safe by:

- **Storing medicines, cleaners and other dangerous substances in locked cabinets**
- **Not leaving small children unattended**

You can't remove all the safety hazards from your life, but you can reduce them. You can avoid major hazards and prepare for emergencies by taking the following steps:

- **Keep emergency phone numbers by your telephone.**
- **Make a first aid kit for your home.**
- **Make a family emergency plan.**
- **Install and maintain smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors**
- **Follow the directions carefully when using tools or equipment.**

In general, most people experience decreased mobility as they age. Vision, hearing and the sense of smell also often decrease, as you get older. Keep these in mind as you consider home safety changes to your home.

Remove scatter rugs

Unless they're attached firmly to the floor, remove all scatter rugs from areas of your home. Loose scatter rugs are easy to snag a toe on and are the cause of many falls.

Brighten your lighting

Bright light is essential to helping elder people see their way inside and outside your home, reducing the risk that they'll fall. Bright lighting in kitchen work areas reduces the risk of burns and cuts. Use at least 60-watt bulbs in most

rooms and at least 100-watt bulbs for reading. Place night-lights through key pathways in your home, for instance the route to the bathroom.

Use proper lighting in the kitchen to avoid injuries



Hide electrical cords

Move lamps and other appliances closer to the walls so that electrical cords don't extend into traffic areas. Cords may be difficult to see by older adults with low vision and could be a tripping hazard. If you must extend a cord across an area use tape to secure the cord to the floor and attract attention to it. Don't cover the cord with a rug.

Rearrange your furniture

Move low furniture, such as coffee tables, out of high-traffic areas. Another consideration when you're rearranging, move chairs closer together.

Lower the water temperature

Most hot water heaters are set at 150 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to scald

within seconds. If you have access to your water heater, turn the temperature down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the low setting. If you can't adjust your water heater, consider faucets and valves that prevent scalding - for instance, when someone flushes the toilet while you're in the shower.

Use a bathmat

Non slip mats and strips applied to the floor of your bathtub or shower will reduce the risk of falls. A wet floor can be just as slippery as the tub, so use a bathmat or textured strip outside the shower, too.

Adjust your chair cushions

Getting out of a soft-cushioned or low chair can prove challenging. Put a board under soft cushions. Raise the height of a chair by placing a pillow or folded blanket on top of the seat.

Move bedroom lamps closer to the bed

Lamps and lighting in the bedroom should be easily reached from the bed.



Secure all windows in your house to avoid accidents