

A GUIDE FOR CARE AT HOME

Home Safety Checklist

Bathroom Safety:

- Grab bars on the bathroom walls, near the toilet or along the bathtub or shower can keep you balanced as you sit or rise. Ask your nurse for more information.
- Use a slip-resistant rug next to your bathtub or shower.
- A mounted or suction liquid soap dispenser on the bathtub/shower wall may reduce the risk of falling while reaching.
- Non-skid adhesive textured strips on the bathtub/shower floor can help reduce the risk of slipping.
- A sturdy plastic seat (shower chair) can be placed in the bathtub if you feel unsteady or if you feel that you cannot safely lower yourself to the floor of the bathtub and out again.
- A raised toilet seat or a toilet seat with armrests may help you to keep your balance getting on or off the toilet.
- Sit when shaving, brushing your teeth, fixing your hair or putting on make-up. An extra long mirror over the sink can be used when sitting.



Bedroom Safety:

- Clear clutter from the floor so that nothing is in your way.
- Have a lamp, flashlight and telephone near the bed.
- Place nightlights along the path from the bedroom to the bathroom.



Living Area Safety:

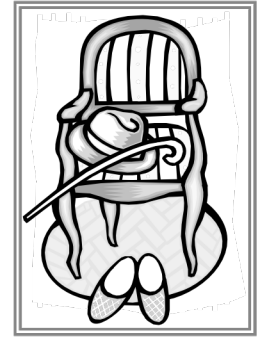
- Arrange the furniture to create clear paths between rooms.
- Think about removing low coffee tables, magazine racks, footrests, and plants from pathways in the rooms you use.
- Look for easy access light switches at entrances to your rooms so that you do not need to walk into a dark room to turn on the light. Glow in the dark switches may be helpful, or sound-activated lamps.



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- Look for loose rugs, and secure these with double faced tape or slip resistant backing.
- In rooms with wall-to-wall carpeting – make sure that carpet is secure and there are no wrinkles or raised areas.
- Make sure that electric appliance and telephone cords are out of your way, but do not put cords under a rug.
- Identify wobbly chairs and tables - you could lean on them and fall.
- If you have concrete, ceramic or marble floors, secured rugs in your path could lessen any injury if you fall.
- Identify loose wood floorboards that need repair and plan to repair them.
- Try to sit on furniture that is firm, high and has armrests to help you when you stand.
- Consider a cordless phone you can keep by your side so you do not hurry to reach the phone.



Kitchen Safety:

- Take throw rugs out of the kitchen.
- Any liquid, grease or food spilled on the floor needs to be cleaned up immediately before you slip.
- Store your food, dishes and cooking equipment at an easy-to-reach, waist high level.
- Do not stand on chairs or boxes to reach upper cabinets. Use a step stool with a handrail.
- Use non-skid floor wax.
- A counter-top toaster oven may be easier to use than leaning over to reach an oven.



Get Regular Eye Exams:

- Have your eyes checked regularly – do not put off getting new glasses.

Understand the Side Effects of Your Medications:



- Feeling weak or dizzy can be a possible side effect of many medications and can increase the risk of falls. Talk to your nurse, doctor or pharmacist about side effects caused by your medications, and read the information about side effects that comes with each of your prescriptions.



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Know How to Safely Sit and Stand:

- When moving from lying down to standing, sit up first and stay sitting a moment or two. Then stand up slowly and stand a few seconds before trying to walk.

Wear Sensible Shoes:

- Floppy slippers and shoes with slick soles can make you stumble and fall. You can also easily fall walking in your stocking feet. Instead:
- Wear properly fitting, sturdy shoes with nonskid soles.
- Avoid shoes with extra-thick soles.
- Choose lace-up shoes instead of slip-ons, and keep the laces tied.
- Select footwear with fabric fasteners if you have trouble tying laces.
- Use a long-handled shoehorn if you have trouble putting on shoes.
- Shop in the men's department if you're a woman who can't find wide enough shoes.
- Always keep your toenails well trimmed.



Reduce the Risk of Falls on Stairs:

- How well lit are your stairs? You want to reduce situations in which you could miss a step and fall, especially at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Are there stair treads on steps you use?
- Are there handrails along the steps? Both sides preferred.
- If no stair railing, place your hand on the wall while going up and down the stairs.



Carpeting and Area Rugs Tips:

- Avoid using patterned or deep pile carpeting, solid colors show the edges of the steps more clearly.
- If you have trouble seeing the edge of the stairs, put a brightly colored piece of tape at the edge.
- Be careful walking from a carpeted room to a tile floor and back.



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Good Lighting is Important to Safety



- Keep flashlights handy in event of a power outage.
- Use 100-watt bulbs, as light takes longer to reach the back of your eye where you sense color motion. Note: Only use higher watt bulbs if they do not exceed the warning on your lamps or fixtures to avoid a fire hazard.

Other Safety Tips

- Develop a fire escape plan with your family that identifies two exits out of every room and an established meeting place outside.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and have someone test them monthly. Change the batteries twice a year (every 6 months).
- Buy and learn how to use a fire extinguisher. **DO NOT SMOKE IN BED!**
- Check-in with someone such as a family member, a friend or a neighbor on a daily basis. This way, if you are unable to get to the phone or need particular assistance on a given day, the absence of the call will signal someone that something may be wrong.

Emergency Preparedness

- Before an emergency occurs, consider what steps will be important to safeguard yourself and your family. Meet with your family to discuss the plan and practice it. Keep the plan simple so all family members can remember the important points.
- Have a plan to obtain supplies such as food, water, medicines, flashlights, etc. in case of a community emergency.
- Obtain a battery-operated radio to hear local updates on potential weather or other disastrous events that may impact your staying in your home.
- Notify the Interim HealthCare Hospice office as soon as possible if you have to leave your home.
- During power outages our agency phone service may be interrupted. If you require emergency assistance during this time, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Our agency will contact you as soon as possible when phone service is restored.

Medical Waste Disposal

- Put medical waste (wound dressings, bandages, IV tubing, etc.) in a separate plastic trash bag and dispose of it in your regular household garbage.
- Dispose of syringes, needles and lancets in a plastic detergent bottle, 2 liter soda container or aluminum coffee can with a sealable top. Tape the lid shut when the container is $\frac{3}{4}$ full and put it in your regular household garbage.

