

Caregiver's Corner



Safety Tips for the At-Home Caregiver

Safety Savvy. . .

Does *Your Home* Pass The Test?

Accidents at home can cause unwanted trips to the emergency room and unnecessary injuries. Many times, people become so familiar with their surroundings, they forget to use a critical eye to spot potential problem areas.

Bathrooms, bedrooms, and stairs are common accident-prone areas. If your loved one lives alone and is subject to frequent falls, you may wish to consider signing-on with an emergency response system, such as Lifeline, for an added measure of security.

Here are a few home safety tips:

Outside

- √ Adequate lighting in traveled areas
- √ Sidewalks free of debris
- √ Snow and ice removed from travel paths
- √ Railings available on exterior steps
- √ Steps in good repair
- √ Slippery surfaces minimized

Inside

- √ Grab bars in bath and shower
- √ Linoleum and tile floors in good repair
- √ Floor surfaces dry and clean
- √ Spills dealt with quickly
- √ Throw rugs have been eliminated
- √ Pathways are free of clutter
- √ Automatic night lights in every room
- √ Sturdy stool available to reach high places
- √ Stairs free of clutter
- √ Handrails installed on both sides of stairs
- √ Extension cords used minimally and not across traffic areas
- √ Electrical appliances in good working order
- √ Heaters located away from flammable materials
- √ Smoke detectors in place on all floors of the house, with batteries changed twice a year
- √ Phone in good working order

Additionally, there are important steps you may wish to consider for your loved one's personal safety. Keep names of numbers of family, friends and caregivers written down and in a handy spot. In the event of a real emergency, your loved one may not remember who is on the list, or their phone number.



Personal Safety Tips

Set up a bedside table with lamp, flashlight, phone, emergency numbers.

Ensure glasses and/or hearing aides are at arms reach at night

Keep emergency numbers by all phones

Consider a portable phone in addition to a landline phone - keep portable phone charged at all times

All phones should have lighted keypads

To prevent falls, sit on edge of bed for 30-seconds before rising. Ensure shoes fit snugly, and tie all shoe strings

Drink plenty of fluids, and eat properly to avoid drop in blood sugar, which could cause confusion or lightheadedness

Keep areas well ventilated, especially in hot weather

Write down directions to your house and your phone number, and keep with other emergency numbers

If you live alone and are susceptible to falls, consider signing up with Lifeline emergency response system. They can be reached at 1-800-543-3546 or you can contact them on-line at www.lifelinesys.com