

Home Safety Checklist for Fall Hazards:

Floors

- Remove all loose throw rugs and make sure carpeting is secured to the floor without folds, wrinkles, worn spots or rips. Choose carpet with short dense pile.
- Make sure electrical and phone cords are tucked out of the way.
- Keep floors and stairways free of clutter.
- Clean up spills immediately and never walk on freshly washed floors.
- Be careful when walking on changing surfaces such as carpet to tile.

Bathroom

- Install securely anchored grab bars over the tub, the shower wall and by the toilet if needed. Do not rely on soap dishes and towel bars.
- If you feel unsteady in the shower or tub, use a bath or shower chair and be seated while bathing and use a hand held shower adapter.
- Use a non-slip mat in the tub or bath.
- Use a raised toilet seat if it will be easier.
- Place soaps and shampoos in easy to reach securely fixed holders.
- Sit while shaving, brushing teeth, fixing your hair and make up if you are very unsteady.

Traffic Lanes

- Make sure that you can walk across every room and from one room to another without detouring around furniture.
- Make sure the traffic lane from your bedroom to the bathroom is free of obstacles.

Lighting

- Have light switches by every doorway.
- Use night lights to assist you during the night in bedroom, hallways and bathroom.
- Have a lamp within easy reach of your bed.
- All stairways should be well lit and have a switch at the top and the bottom.
- Have enough lighting to eliminate shadowy areas.

Stairways

- If you have trouble seeing the edge of the stairs, apply brightly colored tape to the edges to help define the edge.
- Use a securely fastened handrail that extends the entire length of the stairs and on each side.
- If there is not a railing on both sides use one hand on the wall while going up and down the stairs.
- Make sure the rail stands out far enough from the wall to get a good grip.
- Have the end of the rail distinctly shaped so that you are alerted when coming to the end.
- All internal and external stairways should have no broken, sagging, sloping or chipped up areas and all carpet should be securely fastened.

Ladders and Stepstools

- Make sure that you use a sturdy step stool or ladder to reach high cupboards and items, make sure it is high enough for the job you are performing.
- Never stand on a chair to reach high places.
- Make sure that ladder spreaders are fully extended.
- Place ladder on a firm, flat un-cluttered location.
- When using a ladder or step stool always face towards the steps and never go higher than recommended on the ladder.
- Avoid using a step stool on a regular basis by placing frequently used items on a shelf within easy reach.

Outdoor Areas

- Make sure your walkways are clear of clutter, are smooth and the surface un broken.
- Make sure lawn areas are free of holes, watch for mole holes, etc.
- Always put away garden tools and hoses when not in use.
- Try and keep walkways free of wet leaves and snow.
- Always use de-icers or salt on well traveled icy areas.
- Place mats at doorways for people to wipe wet feet on.

Shoes

- Always wear shoes which have soles with good traction.
- Wear house slippers that fit well and do not easily slip on and off.
- Always avoid walking in stocking feet.
- Wear good quality well fitting low healed oxfords, loafers or sneakers when you walk or work in house or yard.

Personal Precautions

- Be alert for unexpected hazards, such as out of place furniture.
- If young children visit, be on the lookout for children or toys on the floor.
- If you have pets be alert for them to get underfoot.
- If you carry a large package make sure it does not block your vision.
- Divide heavier bags into small loads
- When you reach or bend, hold onto a stable structure to give you support.
- Wear house slippers that fit well and do not easily slip on and off.
- Avoid rushing for the doorbell.
- Use a portable phone to keep by you when sitting to avoid jumping up quickly to answer it.
- Always take time to regain your balance when changing positions such as getting into sitting from lying and standing after sitting for a while, pause, wait a moment until you are sure you are stable and well balanced.
- If you wear glasses make sure your prescription is up to date.
- If you live alone make sure you have daily contact with a neighbor or friend.
- Keep yourself in good physical condition with exercise, a good diet, adequate rest and regular medical check ups.
- Use a walker or a cane if needed, do not rely on furniture or the walls for support.