

Home Safety Checklist for Seniors

Be **safe** and enjoy a **better quality of life!**

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, more than 600,000 older Americans are treated each year in hospital emergency rooms for injuries at home. Many of these injuries result from hazards that are easy to overlook, but easy to fix. By taking some simple steps to correct them, many injuries could be prevented.

How safe is your home? Let's find out!

Use this checklist to spot possible safety problems. This checklist is organized by areas in the home. However, some potential hazards are in more than just one area of a home.

All Areas of the Home

- Eliminate "scatter rugs" -- the lightweight rugs without heavy backing. Trip hazard! -- Purchase new rugs with slip-resistant backing.
- Check all Electrical Outlets and Switches -- Are any outlets and switches unusually warm or hot to the touch? Unusually warm or hot outlets or switches may indicate that an unsafe wiring condition exists. Contact an electrician! Unplug any suspect devices.
- Arrange furniture so that outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords. If you must use an extension cord, place it on the floor against a wall where people cannot trip over it.
- Furniture resting on cords can damage them, creating fire and shock hazards. Electric cords which run under carpeting may cause a fire.
- Smoke / Carbon Monoxide Detectors - Have smoke / carbon monoxide detectors been installed in their home? At least one detector should be placed on every floor. Many home fire injuries and deaths are caused by smoke and toxic gases, rather than the fire itself.
- Are emergency numbers posted on or near the telephone? Emergency telephone numbers for the police, fire department, local poison control center, and your doctor, along with a neighbor's number, and numbers for close family members, should be highly visible and printed clearly in large letters.

Bathroom

- Mats in tub- should have holes to drain the water out.
- Ever drop soap? Place bar in an old nylon and tie to safety grab bar. It can stretch and then you won't worry about having to try to pick it up.
- No Rugs are Best! If you have to have a rug -- rugs with rubber bottom for a bath mat only!
- NO oil products used in bathroom -- spilled drops cause slippery floors!
- Shower benches are great! But what type? Only use shower benches where ALL LEGS are inside the shower or tub. Types with outside legs get water on the floor and cause falls.
- Do you have a handheld shower head on a hose? They work great even if you stand.
- Do you have safety Grab Bars moving in and out and while IN the shower? Do you grab for the towel racks? -- Towel racks are not made for your weight!

Bedroom

- Safety Rails for your bed – if you need them – get them!
- Rails are available to assist in getting in and out. Also transfer poles are very helpful.
- Height of bed ----not too high to get into, not too low if problem standing up.
- No long bedspreads – they cause tangles and trips getting in and out.
- A footstool is helpful for dressing and putting on shoes. Should not be used to get into or out of bed -- get the bed height changed!
- Lower closet racks so you can reach what you need without using a step ladder.
- Get shoe rack raised to a comfortable height that you can reach!
- Get a hook(s) on closet doors for robes or other clothes – best not to have any clothes on floor that can cause tripping.

Kitchen

- In the kitchen, check the range area. Are towels, curtains, and other things that might catch fire located away from the range? Placing or storing non-cooking equipment like potholders, dish towels, or plastic utensils on or near the range may result in fires or burns.
- If replacing range – get one with knobs in front so you do not need to reach over to the back when burners are hot.
- Wear clothing with short or close-fitting sleeves while cooking.
- Pans should have NON- METAL handles, safe to touch. You can get HOT GLOVES which fit well like a glove and are safe for oven temperatures.
- Use Wood and Plastic spoons for stirring – Metal spoons conduct too much heat.
- Buy LARGE handle utensils – easier and safer to use.
- For chopping – get a hand chopper (usually round) – safer then a paring knife.
- Check water in sink with elbow if your hands are not as sensitive as they once were.
- Stove – move hot pots to sink by sliding along on a pad or towel to the sink to drain. Or wait until they are cool. Don't carry hot pots of anything across an open area.
- Refrigerator tip – when getting multiple items, set them on a cart or use a cookie sheet with sides and make one trip (if the weight is okay).

Outside Entrances

- Step too high for knees? Get a booster step built that is secured permanently.
- Railings? Can you reach both sides? Are railings secure and feel safe?
- Stairways in the home-- NO Center carpet. Bars come loose and cause falls.
- Should be all secured carpet OR no carpet at all.
- Are all the entrances you use SAFE with railings and steps that are comfortable?

[Contact us](#) for an assessment and solutions to your everyday challenges.

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