

Preventing falls – a safety check list



Philips Lifeline helps you live safely and more independently

- Continue living in the comfort of your own home.
- Prompt, caring assistance at the touch of a button – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Security and peace of mind for you and your family.

Fall prevention at home

Maintain your independence

A study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine found that preventing falls and the resulting injuries can reduce or delay the need to move to a long-term care facility.¹

Causes of falls in and around the home

Health and age-related changes

- Problems with balance
- Slow reflexes
- Poor eyesight
- Use of certain medications

Dangerous situations in the home

- Slippery floors
- Poor lighting
- Electrical cords in pathways
- Loose rugs
- Raised thresholds
- Clutter

For seniors, falls in and around the home are the most frequently occurring accident. In fact, falls are the leading cause of injury death among older adults.²

See the next sheet for a helpful falls prevention checklist.

A fall prevention checklist

Outside safety

- ✓ Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or are higher or lower than the rest.
- ✓ Paint outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better traction. Keep outdoor walkways clear and well lit.
- ✓ Clear snow and ice from entrances and sidewalks.

Make your home safe

- ✓ Remove all extraneous clutter in your house.
- ✓ Keep telephone and electrical cords out of pathways.
- ✓ Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- ✓ Ensure that carpets are firmly attached to the stairs.
- ✓ Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily.

Keep a well-lit home

- ✓ Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- ✓ Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- ✓ Keep a flashlight handy.
- ✓ Have light switches at both ends of stairs and halls. Install hand-rails on both sides of stairs.
- ✓ Turn on the lights when you go into the house at night.

Tips for a safer bath

- ✓ Add grab bars in shower, tub and toilet areas.
- ✓ Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- ✓ Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower.
- ✓ Consider using an elevated toilet seat.

Use care walking

- ✓ Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- ✓ Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Avoid walking in stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- ✓ Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs including over-the-counter drugs, can make you drowsy, dizzy and unsteady.
- ✓ Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.
- ✓ Discuss safe amounts of alcohol intake with your physician.
- ✓ Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance.
- ✓ If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.

VNA Care Network & Hospice's **home health care** services help people live independently while dealing with health concerns. To learn more, call **800-728-1862** or e-mail **info@vnacarenetwork.org**. For **Lifeline**, call Carol Potter today at **800-521-5539, x5459**.