

FALLS PREVENTION CHECKLIST

Adapted from Temple University's Fall Prevention Project

Overview

Each year in the United States, thousands of older Americans fall at home. As a result, many are seriously injured or disabled. The most common injuries are hip fractures and traumatic brain injury, and the consequences are severe. Between 20% and 30% of persons over the age of 65 years who suffer a hip fracture as the result of a fall will die within one year. Following a traumatic brain injury, less than 45% of persons over 75 years of age are discharged home. In addition to acute injury, falls result in reduced independence due to fear, decreased mobility and functional disability.

Falls often occur due to risk factors that can be modified and home hazards that can be fixed. This checklist will help you to identify and correct problems that might increase your fall potential. Read each suggestion, and ask a friend or relative to assist you in making each modification. If needed, a handyman can be hired to make necessary repairs in your home. Check with your insurance company to see if coverage is available.

Home and Daily Activity Hazards

Floors

- Clear pathways of furniture.
- Remove clutter from the floor.
- Remove low chairs that are difficult to sit in and get out of easily.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Coil cords and wires and tape to the wall.
- Secure carpet edges.
- Don't use floor wax.

Stairs and Steps

- Remove all objects from the stairs.
- Fix broken or uneven steps.
- Secure carpet or tread on stairs.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairs that are as long as the stairs.
- Fix loose handrails.
- Install lights at top and bottom of stairs.
- Replace burnt out light bulbs.
- Install light switches at top and bottom of stairs.
- Use reflecting tape at the top and bottom of stairs.

Kitchen

- Keep frequently used items on low shelves.
- Remove rugs.
- Keep a list of important healthcare information current and visible on your refrigerator. See the *VIAL of LIFE* emergency information form.

Bedrooms

- Place an easy to use lamp close to the bed.
- Put in a night light on the way to the bathroom.

- Install handrails or place a sturdy piece of furniture next to the bed.

Bathrooms

- Use a non-slip rubber mat on the shower or tub floor.
- Install grab bars next to the tub and toilet.
- Install a raised toilet seat.
- Install a padded tub or shower seat.

Outdoors

- Repair cracked or uneven sidewalks.
- Trim shrubbery along the pathway to the door.
- Install adequate lighting by doors and along walkways.

Clothing

- Wear sturdy shoes with thin, non-slip soles.
- Avoid slippers and athletic shoes.
- Hem pants so that they don't touch the floor in bare feet.
- Consider wearing an alarm device or a whistle that will bring help in case of a fall.
- Keep a list of important healthcare information in your purse or wallet. See the *VIAL of LIFE* emergency information form.

Physician Visit

- Ask your doctor about beginning a regular exercise program.
- Take all medications to your doctor at each visit.
- Ask your doctor about appropriate nutritional supplementation.
- Have your vision checked annually.

Telephones

- Make sure the phone can be reached from the floor.
- Keep a telephone within reach of the bed.
- Consider a cordless or cellular phone for your pocket.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers next to each phone.