

Worksheet: Home Safety Checklist



The following room-by-room checklist can alert you to potential hazards in an older person's home. Use it to identify any changes or repairs needed to help keep them safe. Keep in mind that it may not be necessary to make all of the suggested changes. It is important, however, to reevaluate home safety every so often as the person's behavior and needs change.

Throughout the home

- Are any repairs needed?
- Is the house well lit, inside and out, particularly at the top and bottom of stairs? Do any lightbulbs need to be replaced?
- Are emergency phone numbers (ambulance, Poison Control, doctors, hospital, etc.) and the person's home address near all telephones?
- Is there clutter, which can cause disorientation and confusion and increase the risk of falling?
- Is mail, recycling, or trash piling up? Do there need to be more trash and recycling containers around the house?
- Is each bottle of prescription medicine clearly labeled with the person's name, name of the drug, drug strength, dosage frequency, and expiration date?
- If there are guns in the home, are they locked up and unloaded, with ammunition stored separately?

Floors

- Are there any tripping hazards at exterior entrances or inside the house (throw rugs, for example)?
- Are there non-slip strips or mats on tile and wood floors or surfaces that may get wet? Are carpets fixed firmly to the floor?
- Are all walking areas free of furniture and extension and electrical cords?
- Have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms been installed near the kitchen and in all bedrooms? Have the batteries been checked recently?

Stairs

- Are the stairs manageable, or is a ramp or gate needed?
- Could handrails be installed on both sides of the staircase?

Is there at least one stairway handrail that extends beyond the first and last steps on each flight of stairs?

Are any outdoor steps sturdy and textured to prevent falls in wet or icy weather? Mark the edges of steps with bright or reflective tape.

Bathrooms

Are there grab bars near toilets and in the tub or shower?

Have nonskid adhesive strips, decals, or mats been placed in the tub and shower? If the bathroom is uncarpeted, consider placing these strips next to the tub, toilet, and sink as well.

Have a plastic shower stool and a hand-held shower head been installed to make bathing easier?

Is the water heater set at 120° F to avoid scalding tap water?

Is there a night light to make overnight trips to the bathroom safer?

Kitchen

Are there safety knobs and an automatic shut-off switch on the stove?

Is there enough food in the fridge? Is any of it spoiled? Are there staple foods (such as cereal, sugar, canned soup) in the cabinets?

Has a drain trap been installed in the kitchen sink to catch anything that may otherwise become lost or clog the plumbing?

Outdoors

Are there secure locks on all outside doors and windows?

If a walker or wheelchair is needed, can the entrances to the house be modified – perhaps by putting in a ramp to the front door?

Is there a small bench or table by the entry door to hold bags and packages while unlocking the door?

Is outside lighting adequate? Light sensors that turn on lights automatically as you approach the house may be useful.

Have bushes and foliage been pruned away from walkways and doorways?

If there is a swimming pool, is it safe? Restrict access to a swimming pool by fencing it with a locked gate, covering it, and closely supervising it when in use.

Have you addressed any uneven surfaces or walkways, hoses, and other objects that may cause a person to trip?

