

Fall Hazards Home Safety Checklist

You can help prevent falls after you leave the hospital by doing these:

- Learn more about your medications and how they interact. Some medicines can make you drowsy or light-headed, which may lead to falls. Talk with your physician and/or pharmacist about your medications to make sure you know how to best prevent falls.
- Wear slippers and shoes with non-skid soles when walking.
- Have your vision checked and use prescription glasses or contact lenses as needed. Vision problems can increase your chance of falling.
- Talk with your physician about an exercise program to improve your strength, coordination and flexibility.
- Take steps to make your living areas safer.

This is a room-by-room checklist that highlights possible fall hazards in your home. If you check off any of these questions, use the suggestions to help reduce your chances of falling.

Bathroom

- Is the path from your bedroom to the bathroom dark?
 - Add nightlights to help light the path so you can see.
- Do you use towel racks to balance or grab onto while getting into or out of the shower or bathtub?
 - Install grab bars inside your shower or bathtub that will support your weight. Towel racks may not be mounted well enough to support your weight.
- Is it hard to stand during a shower?
 - Add a shower seat so you can shower without getting tired or risk falling because of dizziness.
- Is your shower floor and/or bathtub slippery?
 - Install non-skid strips or a non-slip mat.
- Is there any water on the floor after your bath or shower? Are there leaks from your bathtub or shower?
 - Patch leaks with caulk or call a repair service.
 - Wipe up water right away to prevent slipping.
 - Use a bath mat with a slip-resistant backing.

- Do you need to reach far or turn around to get your towels, shampoo and soap?
 - Attach a storage unit to the side of your bathtub or shower wall. This will keep your supplies close by and easy to reach.
- Is it hard to get on and off the toilet?
 - Use a raised toilet seat.
 - Install handrails near the toilet.

Bedroom

- Is a lamp near your bed hard to reach?
 - Move the lamp closer to your bed so it is within reach. Or, attach a light to your headboard to reduce your chances of falling out of bed.
- Do you need to get out of bed to reach your phone or glasses?
 - Use a longer telephone cord or cordless phone, or keep your cell phone within easy reach of your bed.
 - Keep your glasses close by so you can reach them.
- Are there phone, light or TV cords running along the floor in the walkways?
 - Reroute cords so they do not run through walkways. Or, get an electrician to install more outlets. Cords are a tripping hazard.
- Are there clothes, shoes, books and/or other clutter on the floor?
 - Remove clutter from walkways to reduce your chances of tripping.
- Do you get up many times during the night to use the bathroom?
 - Try using a portable toilet near your bed so you do not have to walk to the bathroom.

Kitchen

- Are there loose floor mats or rugs in the kitchen?
 - Remove any loose floor mats or rugs.
- Do you need to reach far, bend over or climb on a stool to get commonly used kitchen items or foods?
 - Rearrange your cupboards and drawers so the items you use the most are kept in waist-high spaces.
 - Use a sturdy step stool with a grab bar to reach items stored overhead.
 - Do not use a chair as a step stool.
- Is there liquid, food, grease and/or clutter on the floor?
 - Keep floor surfaces clean and dry.
 - Sweep often.
 - Wipe up spills right away so you do not slip.

Living areas

- Do your carpets, rugs and floor coverings have frayed corners or rolled-up edges?
 - Remove damaged floor coverings or secure them well with double-sided tape or nails. It is important to have flat, sturdy walkways for safety.
- Are there throw rugs in the walkways?
 - Remove loose throw rugs for your safety.
- Are any of your chairs or couches low to the ground?
 - Use higher seats with higher armrests to get into and out of from a sitting position.
- Do you have to get up to answer the phone?
 - Keep a phone nearby so you do not have to get up quickly if it rings.
 - Keep a cordless phone nearby.
 - Attach your cell phone to a lanyard and wear it . Or, always keep your cellphone in your pocket so it is handy at all times, even if you fall.
- Do you have to walk over or around electrical cords or wires?
 - Reroute cords so they do not run through walkways. Or, get an electrician to install additional outlets. Cords are a tripping hazard.
- Are there newspapers, boxes, shoes and/or other clutter on the floor?
 - Remove clutter from walkways to reduce your chances of tripping.
- Do you need to walk around furniture to get through your living area?
 - Rearrange furniture so there are clear, straight paths for walking through rooms.
- Are you often alone?
 - Consider wearing an alarm device that will alert help in case you have a fall or an emergency.
 - Attach your cell phone to a lanyard and wear it. Or, always keep your cellphone in your pocket so it is handy at all times, even if you fall.
- Do you have to reach up to pull cords on lights or ceiling fans?
 - Install longer cords or link ceiling fans and lights to a light switch on the wall so you do not have to reach.

Stairs

- Are any steps broken or uneven?
 - Fix all loose or broken steps.

- Is the carpet on your steps loose or torn?
 - Remove or reattach any carpet that is loose or torn. Carpet should be firmly attached to every step.

- Are the handrails loose or broken? Is the handrail on only 1 side of the stairs?
 - Repair loose handrails. For safety, handrails should be on both sides of the stairs for the full length of the stairway.

Where to buy safety equipment

You can buy safety equipment from a medical/surgical supply store, your local pharmacy or a hardware store. If the equipment is too expensive, ask your clinician for other options.

If you have any questions or concerns, ask your clinician.