

HOME SAFETY

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



National Home Safety Month

Where are the Hidden Hazards for at Home Seniors?

There could be hidden hazards to your aging loved one in their home. It is essential to recognize and remedy these hazards to keep your senior safe at home.

Home is not always a sweet home. There could be hidden hazards to your aging loved one in their very own home. It is essential that these hazards are recognized and remedied to keep your senior safe and sound at home.

1. Stairs

Stairs can pose a dangerous risk if they aren't carefully evaluated. Falls are the most common cause of injury and death in individuals over age 65. There are several factors that can contribute to a fall on a stairway including steep stairs, lack of railing and stairs in poor condition.

Tips to minimize risk on stairs:

- Add railings to both sides of stairways
- Make sure railings are secure and in good condition
- Ensure stairway is well lit with light switches at the top and bottom

2. Lighting

Having a well-lit home can help seniors get around better and prevent them from falling, reading labels incorrectly and tripping over items in the bathroom or walkways.

Tips to minimize risk with lighting:

- Have a night light for all bathrooms
- Ensure there is bright lighting in areas where medication is stored, so the label can be read easily
- Check that the proper light bulbs and wattage are used throughout the home
- Make sure there is adequate lighting in the kitchen, especially around the stove and oven area and where knives or sharp appliances may be used

3. Flooring

Slippery floors or worn out rugs can cause an older individual to slip and fall or prevent them from moving around in a walker or wheelchair. Keep floors in good repair to prevent injury and allow them to maintain their mobility.

Tips to minimize risk with flooring:

- Keep floors clean and dry
- Use nonskid mats on the bathroom floor
- Update carpets if needed; low pile carpet is best
- Use rugs sparingly and properly secure them to the floor

Top 10 Hidden Hazards for Seniors at Home:



Stairs



Lighting



Flooring



Bathtub & Shower



Toilet



Obstructed Walkways



Seating



Electrical Cords & Appliances



Medication



Smoke & Fire

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Page 1 of 2

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4. Bathtub and Shower

Getting in and out of the bathtub or shower can be tricky and create a potential safety hazard. Water adds an extra slippery element and steps in showers or tubs can make this an especially challenging area.

Tips to minimize risk with bathtubs and showers:

- Skid-proof the bathtub and make sure bath mats have a non-slip bottom
- Add grab bars to the bathtub and/or shower
- Use a shower seat or a bathtub transfer bench if necessary
- Have hot and cold faucets clearly marked

5. Toilet

Getting on and off the toilet can become increasingly difficult as mobility declines. Make sure your loved one can easily sit on the toilet and then stand up to prevent injuries.

Tips to minimize risk with toilets:

- Adjust the seat height if necessary so it isn't too low or too high
- Add grab bars near the toilet so your senior can grab onto them as they go on and off the seat

6. Obstructed Walkways

Keeping walkways and living spaces clean and clutter-free can help keep individuals from tripping and falling and can help mobility, especially if the adult is in a wheelchair or walker.

Tips to minimize risk with walkways:

- Make sure furniture is not too large that it is obstructing walking paths
- Keep walkways and general areas clean and free from clutter

7. Seating

Having improper seating makes it more difficult for seniors to stand up from a seated position and increases the chances of falling or straining muscles.

Tips to minimize risk with seating:

- Have chairs with armrests so seniors can utilize armrests to help them up
- Adjust seat height if necessary to make it easier to sit and stand up
- Check that all chairs and tables are sturdy and stable

8. Electrical Cords and Appliances

Electrical cords peaking out can create a potential tripping and falling risk. Leaving appliances on or having extension cords can create hazards in the home.

Tips to minimize risk with cords and appliances:

- Keep electrical cords hidden and out of walkways
- Clearly label "on" and "off" switches for small appliances
- Remove electric and telephone cords from high-traffic areas
- Ensure there aren't any electrical cords near sinks
- Keep appliances close to wall outlets

9. Medication

Many seniors are on multiple medications which assist with daily activities and ultimately help them achieve a better quality of life. Precautions should be taken to make sure medication is properly stored and administered, ensuring they do more good than harm.

Tips to minimize risk with medication:

- Make sure medications are clearly labeled and easy to read
- Dispose of any outdated medications properly
- Never use another person's prescription, even if it's for the same ailment
- Keep medicine cabinets well lit and read medicine labels in good lighting

10. Smoke and Fire

Fires can happen in any home due to misuse or just simply a faulty appliance or accident. Set your loved one's home up so they are alerted and prepared if a fire were to happen in their home.

Tips to minimize risk with smoke and fire:

- Make sure smoke detectors are installed in every bedroom and in all levels of the home
- Check and replace batteries in smoke detectors every 6 months
- Keep a fire extinguisher on every floor
- Don't smoke in bed or alone in the home



Home Care Tip:

A home care agency powered by ClearCare offers a free Home Safety Assessment. This 100+ point check was informed by the latest research on the environmental factors that cause falls and injuries. Knowing what to look for, a home care agency can send the report to any family members to make sure that your loved one and any family caregivers are safe.

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Contact Name
Contact Information

Page 2 of 2