

## **SAFETY BEGINS AT HOME CHECKLIST**

More than 1 out of 3 people above 65 fall every year, and more than half of them will fall more than once in any given year. The risk of falls increases with age; six out of ten for people 70 and over fall every year. Falls are more prevalent among women than men. Half of all falls are due to environmental hazards and are PREVENTABLE.

Here is a list of things you can check for and correct to make your home safer.

### **OUTDOORS-**

- Remove any cracks or unevenness in walks and stairs
- Clearly mark the edge of each stair with a paint stripe or tape strip
- Have hand rails on both sides of all stairs
- Keep walkway and stairs free of clutter; rocks, tools, clutter, ice & snow
- Have adequate lighting along walkways and stairs
- Replace gravel walkways and driveways
- Trim back bushes, shrubs, tree branches, vegetation with berries that you can slip on.
- Have outside lights on timer or a motion detector
- Have garage door opener
- Have a bench or small table by door to place packages when entering home

### **KITCHEN-**

- Maintain well lit room. Use maximum allowable wattage bulbs in all fixtures
- Use non-skid wax or no wax at all on linoleum or tile floors
- Use double backed tape or rubber backed scatter rugs in front of sink
- Wipe up spills immediately
- Remove all extension cords.
- Make sure each electrical wall has only two items plugged in
- Have A-B-C fire extinguisher in kitchen
- Make sure you have easy access to shelves- not too low, too high or too deep
- Have telephone near floor- Wall phones can't help you if you are lying on the floor
- If you must climb up to reach high items, use a sturdy step-stool with grab bar

### **BASEMENT-**

- Have A-B-C fire extinguisher
- Have laundry soaps, etc. easy to reach
- Keep areas well lit- 60 watts or better
- Remove clutter from walkways and stairs
- Hand rails securely fastened to both sides
- Rug and/or tread secured and free from frays

### **CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR-**

- One per floor, at least 5 feet above the floor
- Recommended locations- near a gas fueled device- stove, heater, hot water tank
- If you are only installing one CO2 detector, place it outside of bedrooms

### **BATHROOM-**

- Maintain well lit room. Use maximum allowable wattage bulbs in all fixtures
- Use double backed tape or rubber backed rugs, especially outside of tub or shower

- Have a grab bar next to toilet
- Have a raised toilet seat
- Have grab bars in tub or shower
- Apply non-slip treads or secured rubber mat in tub or shower
- Have a padded bath or shower seat
- Have a hand-held shower head
- Have a night light

#### **STAIRWAYS-**

- Well lit
- Clutter free
- Hand rails securely fastened to both sides
- Rug and/or tread secured and free from frays
- Clearly mark the edge of stairs with a paint stripe or tape strip for basement stairs

#### **LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, FAMILY ROOM-**

- Maintain well lit room. Use maximum allowable wattage bulbs in all fixtures
- Use double backed tape or rubber backed scatter rugs
- Make sure the area rug is secured on the edges
- Keep electrical and phone cords away from the walk ways
- Use high couches, chairs for easy sitting and standing
- Remove casters from furniture
- Suggestion- Use a cordless phone and T.V. remote control
- Arrange furniture so you can move around easily
- Avoid clutter on the floor; magazines, newspapers, etc.

#### **SMOKE DETECTORS-**

- Minimum one per floor
- Have both battery operated and electrical smoke detectors
- Replace batteries every six months- Suggestion- do it when you turn your clock back
- Test each one monthly
- Vacuum each one annually
- Have one outside the bedrooms
- Have them installed on the ceilings, not the walls
- Don't ignore alarm, should it go off
- Some have lights that go on when smoke detector is activated. Very helpful in the event that you have an electrical fire.

#### **BEDROOM-**

- Make sure your bed isn't too high. Can your feet touch the floor when you sit on the edge? If not, either lower the bed or get a metal stool with rubber feet.
- Maintain well lit room. Use maximum allowable wattage bulbs in all fixtures
- Use double backed tape or rubber backed rugs
- Remove all extension cords
- Keep phone next to bed and reachable from the floor
- Carpeting should be more than 1/2 inch pile- easy to trip if too deep
- Closets- well lit, easy to reach shelves, without clutter
- Keep shoes off of the floor- Keep them in a closet or on rack
- Keep all electrical & phone cords out of the walk way
- Use a Night Light

- Have a well lit bedside lamp- Consider Touch Lamp
- Have a firm chair with arms for sitting and dressing
- Consider a bedside commode or urinal rather than make midnight bathroom runs

**MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION-**

- Watch out for cats and dogs and their toys on the floor
- Wear shoes with non-slip soles
- Design your home for safety and convenience
- Increase lower body strength, i.e. Tai Chi, weight training, swimming
- Have regular checkups with your physician, optician and hearing specialist
- Review your medications with your doctor especially if you lose balance, or have dizziness
- See your doctor immediately if you experience any dizziness, weakness, falls, unsteadiness or confusion
- See a podiatrist regularly. Sore feet can cause you to fall.
- Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks a day
- To avoid getting dizzy when first getting up from bed, sit on the edge of your bed with your legs over the side of bed for 1-2 minutes before standing up.
- Keep an updated File of Life on your fridge- Review meds every 6 months. Make any changes in pencil
- Trip your circuit breakers every 6 months to avoid oxidation
- Have a Personal Response System in your home. Consider it Peace of Mind Insurance, for you and your family.

This information was provided by:

*My Guardian Angel*

Personal Response Systems, LLC

**Call:  
413-624-0200  
toll free:  
800-624-0200**