

Take Care

Home Safety Audit

GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Remove poisonous houseplants
- Remove or cover mirrors if causing hallucinations
- Put child-proof plugs in outlets
- Remove or lock up sharp objects or potentially breakable objects
- Keep electric fans out of reach
- Lock up prescription and non-prescription drugs
- Lock up cleaning supplies, chemicals, poisons
- Cover smooth or shiny surfaces if causing glare
- Cover radiators with radiator guards
- Lock up valuables, important papers and documents
- Remove firearms
- Place reflector tape on furniture corners
- Cover exposed water pipes

THE KITCHEN

- Lock up sharp objects, knives, possibly glassware
- Lock up poisons, chemicals, detergents
- Cover stove burners, remove knobs, install shut-off valves, install auto-pilots or buy electric stoves, put locks on oven/broiler doors
- Unplug or put away appliances such as blenders, food processors, irons
- Camouflage or disconnect garbage disposals
- Put locks on cabinets
- Put locks on refrigerators/freezers
- Keep garbage out of sight and reach
- Remove small non-food items that could be swallowed

WATER

- Secure water faucets, remove handles or turn off water, reduce hot water temperature
- Put mesh or a screen over open drains
- Make sure electrical cords are not dangling near water

THE BATHROOM

Bathing, Showering

- Install grab rails in tub or shower
- Buy bathmat or non-skid decals for bottom of tub or shower
- Use tub chair or bench for sitting down in tub

- Buy hand held shower nozzle
- Replace glass shower doors with unbreakable plastic
- Lock up razor blades, sharp objects
- Store electric razors out of sight and reach
- Make sure portable heater has auto-off thermostat
- Remove small rugs

Toileting

- Put sign on bathroom door to leave door open so toilet is visible
- Install grab bars for sitting down and getting up from toilet
- Buy sturdy raised toilet seat or commode
- Have toilet paper easily visible and reachable
- Put wastebaskets out of sight if loved one urinates in them

WANDERING (AWAY FROM HOME)

- Secure doors to outside with double key locks, or high or low locks
- Put alarms on doors or disguise them
- Hide key outside or give to neighbor
- Put automatic door closing devices on doors to outside
- Get ID bracelet for older adult
- Notify local police department that your family member is memory impaired

WALKING AROUND (INSIDE THE HOME)

- Reduce clutter
- Remove furniture that could be a hazard
- Pick up small rugs without non-skid backs
- Avoid polished floors that may be slippery or cause glare
- Make sure furniture won't move if leaned on
- Have adequate lighting that does not produce glare
- Put reflector tape in hallways and bedrooms to create a path to follow at night
- Install night lights
- Make sure wires and electrical cords are out of the way

AUTO

- Take away car keys
- Install driver-controlled car door locks or child proof lock on loved one's door so it can't be opened from inside

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- Install driver-controlled car windows
- Disarm or hide controls for automatic garage door

STAIRS

- Put sturdy banisters or grab rails along both sides of stairs
- Put reflector tape on edge of treads
- Install barriers or gates at stairs
- Widen treads or shorten risers
- Replace outdoor stairs with ramps

BEDROOM

- Locate bedroom near bathroom or buy a commode
- Use night-lights to orient person in dark
- Rent or purchase a hospital bed
- Remove bed frame if bed is too high off floor
- Install rails on bed
- Purchase "bumpers" or padding to surround bed
- Install reverse locks on doors
- Use monitor to listen to activity
- Remove carpeting if incontinence is a problem
- Buy room-darkening blinds or shades

WINDOWS, DOORS

- Put opaque tape on glass door and picture windows
- Install spring-loaded door closer
- Put keyed locks on windows

OUTDOORS

- Remove doormats
- Put away garden hose
- Put away barbecue equipment
- Install fences or plant hedges around yard
- Remove poisonous plants
- Be aware of potentially dangerous areas - pools, streams, lakes, tunnels, steep stairways, embankments, foliage and woods, busy streets, parking lots, unlocked parked cars

FIRE SAFETY

- Have smoke alarms
- Supervise or restrict smoking
- Use safety ashtrays
- Keep matched and lighters out of reach
- Use flame-retardant mattresses, pillows, sheets
- Put firefighter sticker in bedroom window

- Inform neighbors of person's impairment and of features of the home, such as double key locks and double bolted doors, that may complicate rescue in an emergency
- Plan procedure for getting out in case of fire

PHONE

- Buy a telephone with direct dialing system for emergency or most important numbers
- Put important phone numbers in large print next to telephone
- Put large numbered template on phone
- Use answering machine for incoming messages
- Make sure phone cord is not a tripping hazard

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

- Keep emergency phone numbers and medical info handy
- Have first aid kit easily accessible
- Put posters summarizing first aid procedures up on wall
- Get ID bracelet or other ID product

Source: www.homemods.org, a university-based and non-profit effort dedicated to promoting aging in place and independent living for persons of all ages and abilities.

