

# Home Care Safety Checklists

In home care is a safe and cost-effective alternative to extended hospital stays or placement in a nursing home for many who are facing a chronic illness, recuperating from surgery or experiencing challenges in performing routine activities of daily living.

- ❖ Promotes faster recovery
- ❖ Improves outcomes
- ❖ Increases the patient's overall physical and psychological well-being
- ❖ Comparable to or less cost than that of assisted living or nursing home care

Use the following checklists to learn how you can make your home safer for you and your family members.



## Bedroom Safety Checklist

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- ☐ Adjust bed so it is low enough to sit comfortably while getting into bed, yet high enough to permit easy standing.
- ☐ Maintain a clear path to the bed.
- ☐ Use bedside commodes or bedpans for seniors with mobility problems.
- ☐ Pad corners of bedside tables.
- ☐ Consider buying or renting an adjustable hospital bed with siderails or over-hanging grab bar for seniors who have difficulty getting out of bed.
- ☐ Install a phone next to the bed to use in case of an emergency.
- ☐ Remove electrical and phone cords from pathways.
- ☐ Provide bright lighting.
- ☐ Arrange furniture close to light switches or move lamps closer to beds so elders can see properly should they get out of bed.
- ☐ Remove any fire sources such as smoking materials and heaters from close proximity to the bed or bedding.

## Bathroom Safety Checklist

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- ☐ Equip bathtubs, showers and bathroom floors with non-skid mats or abrasive strips to prevent falls.
- ☐ Place strong, stable grab bars in the bathtubs and showers.
- ☐ Install stable shower seats or transfer benches.
- ☐ Have a qualified individual lower the setting of the hot water heater to “low” or less than 120 degrees to prevent tap water scalds.
- ☐ Install grab bars around the toilet and consider the use of a toilet-raiser.
- ☐ Provide bright lighting.
- ☐ Install a hand-held shower head.
- ☐ Replace bar soap with easier to handle liquid soap in plastic bottles.

## Kitchen Safety Checklist

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- ☐ Place towels, curtains, and other things that might catch fire away from the range.
- ☐ Do not use the gas range or the oven to heat the home.
- ☐ Keep extender arms and step stools available for easier access to hard to reach items.
- ☐ Replace faucets and handles with levers if the senior has difficulty grasping and turning the existing ones.
- ☐ Use extender arms and step stools to reach items that in inaccessible.
- ☐ Make sure dishes, pots, utensils and food supplies are easily accessible.
- ☐ Lower cabinets, sinks and shelves for wheel chair users.
- ☐ Position bright, non-glare lighting in kitchen work areas
- ☐ Use stove with easy accessible controls.
- ☐ Keep flammable items, such as pot holders and towels, away from the stove area.

## Living Room Safety Checklist

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- ☐ Avoid chairs or sofas that are too low and make it difficult to stand up.
- ☐ Consider using a chair with a lift for help standing up.
- ☐ Choose a chair that is easy to get in and out of.
- ☐ Use a chair with a lift if the individual has difficulty standing up.
- ☐ Consider placing a table next to the chair to keep necessary items nearby.
- ☐ Install a phone next to the chair to use in case of an emergency.
- ☐ Maintain uncluttered pathways.
- ☐ Remove electrical cords and phone cords from pathways.
- ☐ Make sure all runners and small rugs are slip-resistant by attaching double-faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber matting on their backs.
- ☐ Arrange furniture and remove clutter to clear passageways and exits.
- ☐ Make sure that light switches are conveniently located at the entrance.
- ☐ Consider adding automated lighting to illuminate rooms as you enter.
- ☐ Provide bright lighting.

## Stairway Checklist

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- ☐ Replace any worn or loose carpeting, treads or risers on stairs in order to prevent falls. Paint outside steps with rough textured paint or use abrasive strips.
- ☐ Make sure that the steps are even and the risers are of the same size and height.
- ☐ Make sure the stairs are well lit and if possible install light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- ☐ Install secure handrails for easy access in and out of the senior's home.
- ☐ Consider installing a stairs chair or lift for stairs for individuals with mobility issues.
- ☐ Provide bright lighting.

## Fire Safety Checklist

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- ☐ Place at least one smoke detector on every floor of home.
- ☐ Make sure a smoke detector is placed near the bedroom, either on the ceiling or 6-12 inches below the ceiling on the wall.
- ☐ Do not place smoke detectors near air vents.
- ☐ Test the smoke detector monthly.
- ☐ Check and replace batteries and bulbs according to the manufacturer's instructions. Vacuum the grillwork of the smoke detector.
- ☐ Store an accessible fire extinguisher on each floor.
- ☐ Ensure that the windows and doors can be opened without difficulty.
- ☐ Never light candles or smoke in bed, or when drowsy.
- ☐ Never sleep while operating a heating pad. Avoid covering electric blankets when in use, and do not tuck in sides or ends.
- ☐ Do not use extension cords for long term or permanent use, and do not run electrical cords under rugs or allow them to be pinched by furniture.
- ☐ Give space heaters room. They need at least three feet of space away from flammable items.
- ☐ Cover all outlets and switches with cover plates.