



# Safety Begins at Home

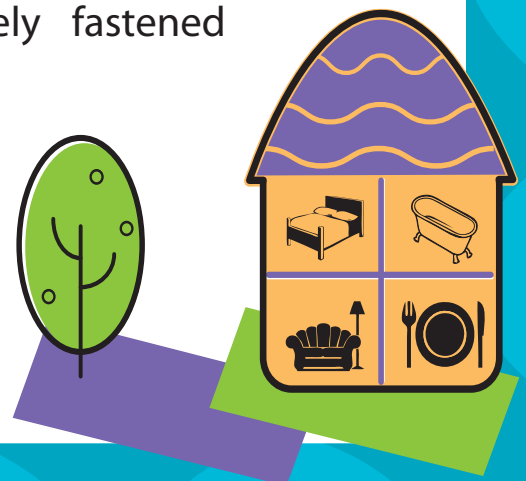
## ...with Stairway Safety

**M**ake your home a safer place: install sturdy handrails on all stairways, no matter how many steps. Handrails should be on both sides of the steps and run slightly beyond the length of the steps.

Homes often do not have handrails on both sides of the steps, especially along the steps at the front door. Only one-quarter of all houses with stairs have banisters or handrails on both sides of the stairs. Equally important is that stairs are well lit, especially if an older adult lives in or regularly visits the home.

### Consider these safety tips to protect everyone in your home:

- ➔ Install light fixtures in stairways, porches and other entrances into the home.
- ➔ Add light switches at the top and bottom of each stairway.
- ➔ Use the maximum strength of light bulb for the fixture. You can increase output without increasing wattage by using compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). These lights will last longer and cost less to use.
- ➔ Repair loose, broken and missing or worn steps.
- ➔ Make sure carpeting on steps is securely fastened and free of holes and frayed edges.
- ➔ Place safety strips on hard step surfaces.



## More Stairway Safety Tips:

- ➔ Keep stairway and steps clear of all objects.
- ➔ Never use stairs for temporary storage or for displaying decorative items.
- ➔ Make sure you can see the leading edge or nosing of each stair tread while walking down the stairs.
- ➔ Paint a contrasting color on the top front edge of all stairs and on doorsills so you can see the edges better.
- ➔ Make sure entrances do not have raised door thresholds.

Only one-quarter of all households with stairs have banisters or handrail on both sides of the stairs.



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### References:

Department of Health and Human Services (CDC) (2005). Check for safety: A home fall prevention checklist for older adults. MetLife Foundation.

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