

Safety Begins at Home

Fall Prevention

Each year, thousands of older adults fall at home. It has been reported by healthcare professionals that one out of three persons over age 65 can be expected to have at least one fall each year. Those who fall one time are two to three times more likely to fall again. Injuries from falls can be severe enough to affect health and independence.

Falls are a leading cause of death for persons over age 65. Approximately 25% of older adults who fall die within one year after the initial fall. In 2005, more than 15,800 Americans age 65 and over died due to a fall.

Preventing falls in the home is important not only for older adults, but also for the entire family. Falls are often due to hazards in the home that are often overlooked but easy to fix. The primary problems are clutter and obstacles. You can reduce the likelihood of trips and falls by making some minor household modifications or changes in behaviors. Safety in your home begins with you identifying problems and removing hazards reducing the potential for falls.

Solutions to Clutter and Obstacles

Floors

- Keep pathways clear for ease of movement throughout your home.
- Remove all scatter or throw rugs. If you use rugs, purchase ones with a non-skid backing. For rugs without a non-skid backing, apply double sided tape to secure them to the floor.
- Pick up and remove papers, magazines, books, shoes, boxes, blankets, towels, or other clutter from the floor after you use them.

Furniture

- Remove excess furniture from rooms.
- Arrange furniture to provide ease of movement throughout the room.
- Avoid placing low furniture, such as a coffee table, in front of the sofa.



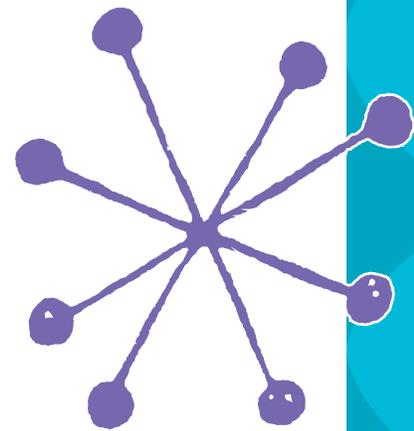
Solutions to Clutter and Obstacles (continued)

Electrical Cords

- Remove all extension cords. If you cannot remove them, be certain not to run the cords under rugs or across pathways.
- Never run telephone cords across areas with high traffic.
- Plug lamps in near the outlet to avoid using extension cords or stretching the cord across the pathway.
- Coil or wrap cords to keep them out of the way.

Store Things or Downsize

- Create additional storage.
- Mount small appliances under cupboards.
- Install inexpensive shelf organizers in cabinets.
- Store unused items out of the way.
- Identify unused items and donate them to friends, family or charity.



References:

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