



Preventing Falls

Everyone

Correct Dangers

- Improve lighting
- Remove tripping hazards from indoor and outdoor spaces. These include throw rugs, clutter on stairs, electric cords.
- Make sure walkways are well lit and clutter free.
- Have secure handrails on both sides of stairs.

Prevent Bathtub and Shower Slips & Falls

- Place slip resistant mats inside and outside the bath and shower.
- Install grab bars to hold onto when getting in and out of the tub or shower.
- Make sure there are no glass containers and nothing with sharp edges near the tub or shower.

Older Adults

Exercise Regularly

- Consider programs that increase strength and improve balance—such as Tai Chi.

Medicines

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review your medicines in order to reduce side effects and ensure that it is safe to take them together.
- Ask your doctor if there are any medicines that you don't need to take any longer.

Health

- Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor at least once a year.

Ask for Help

- Call for help right away if you are injured in a fall.
- Call 9-1-1 if you are injured—the people who respond will check you and take you to the hospital if necessary.
- If you get help quickly after a fall, you can reduce your risk of being hospitalized by 26% and your risk of dying by more than 80%.

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

A Public Fire Safety Message from the Bloomington Fire Department

Informational Source: Home Safety Council

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Know About New Ways to Stay Safe at Home:

- Personal emergency response systems provide a way to contact someone in an emergency.
 - Active Systems— user pushes a button or pulls a cord for help.
 - Passive Systems use sensors to monitor movements.
- Telephones that are easier to use can make calling for help quicker.

Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

Parents and Caregivers are the key to keeping children safe at home!

Baby Walkers and Stairs

- Use stationary activity centers—Never use baby walkers on wheels.
- Use hardware mounted safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.

Windows

- Move chairs, cribs, and other furniture away from windows.
- Install window guards or window stops that permit the window to open no more than 4 inches.

Play Surfaces

- Create a safe place for kids to play outside.
- Watch children closely when they are on play equipment.
- Have a protective surface under play equipment to reduce fall-related injuries.

Unsafe Surfaces

- Grass
- Dirt
- Cement
- Asphalt

Acceptable Surfaces:

- (make 12 inches deep and cover a minimum of six feet in all directions)
- ◆ Shredded rubber
- ◆ Hardwood fiber mulch or chips
- ◆ Pea gravel

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Bathtubs and Showers

- Place slip resistant mats inside and outside the bath and shower.
- Install grab bars to hold onto when getting in and out of the tub or shower.
- Make sure there are no sharp edges.

Baby Furniture

- Use safety straps to keep the baby secure.
- Stay next to the changing table or highchair—the straps alone will not protect a wiggly baby.
- Place baby-carriers on the floor, not on a counter or table.

Emergency Care

- Never try to move a child who appears to be seriously injured from a fall.
- Call 9-1-1
- Administer CPR if the child is not breathing.

Medication...Finding the Healthy Balance

Do you ever feel dizzy or lightheaded? If this happens to you often, it could be a sign of a balance problem—and if you have a loss of balance, you're not alone. Balance problems are among the most common reasons that older adults seek help from a doctor. There are several possible reasons for balance loss. One of the main causes of balance problems among older adults can be medications.

Using multiple medications (4 or more) or using medications incorrectly may lead to dizziness, weakness, and other side effects. Some medicines, such as certain sedatives and antidepressants and those that help lower blood pressure, can also make a person feel dizzy. You should check with your health care provider if you notice a problem while taking a medication. Ask if your medications need to be adjusted or reduced. Your doctor or pharmacist should be able to get you the medication you need while trying to reduce unwanted side effects. In fact, each year you should gather up all of your medications and take them to your doctor or pharmacist to review.

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Fall Prevention Checklist

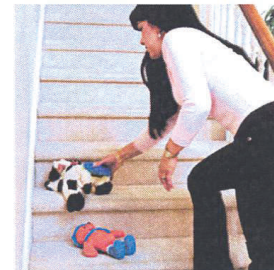
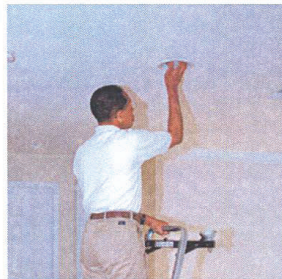
According to *The State of Home Safety in America*™ (2004) conducted by the Home Safety Council, falls are by far the leading cause of unintentional home injury death. Falls account for an average of 5.1 million injuries and nearly 6,000 deaths each year. Walk through your home to identify and remedy potential fall hazards. What to look for:

PREVENT FALLS

- Have handrails on both sides of stairs and steps. Make sure handrails go from the top to the bottom of stairs.
- It is easy to trip on small rugs. Tape them to the floor or do not use them at all.



- Have lots of lights at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Keep the stairs clear.



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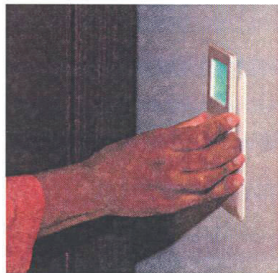
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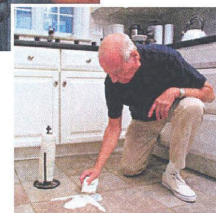
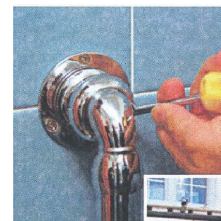
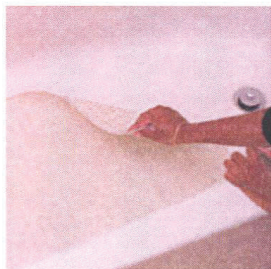
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- Have nightlights in the bedroom, hall and bathroom.
- Have a bath mat with a nonskid bottom on the bathroom floor.



- Have a mat or nonskid strips in the tub and shower.
- Have grab bars in the tub and shower.



- Wipe up spills when they happen.

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PREVENT FALLS

- Always watch young children.
- Window guards can keep a child from falling out the window. Have window guards on upstairs windows. Or install window stops that permit the window to open no more than 4 inches.



- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Cover the ground under playground equipment with a thick layer (9-12 inches) of mulch, wood chips or other safety material.



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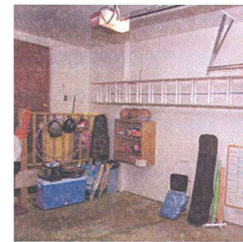
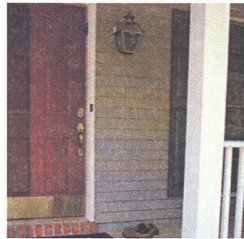
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PREVENT FALLS

- Put bright lights over all porches and walkways.
- Put ladders away after using them. Store ladders on their sides, in a shed or garage.



- Have handrails on both sides of the stairs.
- Keep sidewalks and paths clear, so you don't trip.



- Fix broken or chipped steps and walkways as soon as possible.



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