

# HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Decrease your risks of falls and identify steps you can take to make your home a safer place. Use the checklists to make sure you stay safe at home:

## ENTRANCES:

- Use proper footwear with good tread.
- Install handrails, preferably on both sides of the steps.
- Cover porch steps with gritty, weather-proof paint.
- Install ample lighting.
- Consider installing a ramp into your home.

## LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM:

- Arrange furniture items, such as coffee tables or stools, so they don't become obstacles.
- Remove clutter (electrical cords, telephone wires and other objects).
- Use chairs and couches that have arm rests and back support and allow you to easily sit down and stand up.
- Use a remote-control television.
- Use a programmable and portable telephone.
- Watch out for small pets, as they can trip you.

## BATHROOM:

- Keep a chair at the sink.
- Keep grooming items within easy reach.
- Use an over-the-toilet commode seat or raised toilet seat, or install rails, preferably on both sides of toilet.
- Use a hand-held shower head.
- Use soap on a rope.
- Remove glass shower doors and replace with a shower curtain.
- Use non-skid mats or raised strips inside and outside the tub or shower.
- Have a chair or bench in the shower stall or bathtub.
- Install grab bars in the bathtub/shower area.
- If possible, wait for assistance when getting in and out of the tub.

## KITCHEN:

- Remove all throw rugs.
- Cover linoleum floors with non-skid floor wax.
- Reorganize cabinets so every-day items are within easy reach (not in high or low cabinets).
- Try to place one hand on a steady surface or counter top when opening the refrigerator door.
- Make sure chairs are the correct height and offer back support.
- Place a high chair at the sink if fatigue is an issue.
- Use a push cart when transferring hot or heavy objects from the stove to the table.

## BEDROOM:

- Place a light at the bedside.
- Place a nightlight between the bedroom and bathroom.
- Keep a telephone at the bedside (preferably with large numbers).
- Use side rails on the bed.
- Use a bedside commode, if needed.

## WHEN DRESSING:

- Choose proper-fitting footwear: wear shoes that are comfortable, supportive and have a low, broad heel and a soft sole.
- Sit while putting on socks and shoes.
- Make sure nightgowns and dresses are short enough to avoid tripping when standing or climbing stairs.
- Use adaptive aides, e.g. sock aide reacher and long handled shoe horn.
- Avoid stairs and waxed floors when in stocking feet.

## MOBILITY:

- Limit or avoid alcohol intake as it slows balance reactions.
- Scoot to the edge of the chair and lean forward before standing up.
- Stand still for a moment before walking.
- Consider using a rubber cane tip.
- Add a basket on the front of your walker.
- Stay within the confines of the walker when turning or twisting.
- Wear light-weight shoes with non-skid soles.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Stay as active as possible, as this leads to stronger bones, muscles and joints and better overall balance.
- Be aware of side effects of medications.
- If taking water pills, plan ahead and use the bathroom regularly.
- Cover slippery surfaces with carpet or rugs that are in good repair. Anchor them firmly to the floor, backing area rugs with non-skid rubber.
- Install easy-to-reach light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Use handrails on stairs.
- Avoid climbing on ladders or stools.
- Note surface changes, e.g. grass to side walk or vinyl to carpet.