

HOME SAFETY



Fires & Burns

Smoke Alarms

The majority of home fire deaths happen at night, most often from smoke and poisonous gases, not the fire itself. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement and workshop, and outside all sleeping areas. For extra protection, consider installing a smoke alarm in every bedroom. Be sure to test batteries at least once a month and never remove the batteries from your smoke alarm except to replace them.

Fire Extinguishers

A multipurpose dry chemical Class ABC fire extinguisher is the best choice for general home use. Mount the extinguisher on a bracket on the wall near an exit so that anyone using it can escape from the room if a Fire spreads. Periodically check the gauge to make sure it has pressure. All adult occupants of the home must know when and how to use the extinguisher properly.

Home Escape Plan

Make your plan now, before you need it. Have at least two exits from every room and a meeting place outside the home. Conduct a home fire drill with everyone in your household at least twice a year. Most people underestimate how fast a Fire spreads. You may have as little as two minutes to get your family to safety. Plan and practice exactly what to do in advance.

List of Emergency Phone Numbers

Post a list of emergency phone numbers including the police, fire, doctors and poison prevention centers at every telephone in the home. In the event of a fire, call the fire department from outside the burning building.



Poisonings

Poison Centers

Every Poison Control Center in the country can be reached by calling the AAPCC nationwide hotline, 1-(800-222-1222. Post this number, along with your other emergency numbers, by every phone on your home. If you think someone is poisoned, call the poison center immediately. Experts will answer your call, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Medicines and Household Cleaners

Make sure all medications, caustic cleaning products (example: drain openers, toilet and oven cleaners, rust removers, etc.), automotive fluids (example: windshield washing solution and antifreeze), pesticides, fertilizer and other household chemicals are in their original containers and in a locked cabinet. Buy medicines and household products in child-resistant packaging. Close caps tightly after using medicines and household products. Lock medicines and household products up high so children can't see or reach them.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon monoxide gas is poisonous, but you can't see, smell or taste it. Check all fuel-burning appliances to be sure they work properly: furnace, hot water heater, stove, oven, fireplace, wood stove, and space heater. Put a carbon monoxide alarm near where people sleep. Be sure your alarm has the Underwriters laboratories (UL 2034) label.



Slips & Falls

Grab Bars

Install grab bars in all bathrooms and shower stalls. Firmly anchor them into the wall studs with long screws or follow installation instructions on packaging.

Slip-Resistant

Use a non-slip mat, or install strips or decals in bathtubs and showers to help prevent slipping.

Sufficient Lighting

Use night-lights near bathrooms, bedrooms and stairwells. Make sure stairwells and hallways are always well lit - especially at night. Provide sufficient lighting to all walkways and entrances to your home.

REDUCING YOUR RISK OF FALLING

Falling is a widespread problem. One third to one half of the population over age 65 experience falls and five percent of falls lead to fractures and an additional ten percent will sustain other serious injuries.

Causes of falls

- medical conditions
- decreased vision
- medications
- decreased strength
- foot problems
- uneven/slippery surfaces
- poor lighting
- activity level
- timing demands (i.e. crossing streets)

Reducing your risk

- take care of medical problems as needed
- have your vision checked and wear eyeglasses as needed check with your doctor regarding possible medication
- interaction with may affect your balance
- take medication only as prescribed exercise
- take care of your feet and wear supportive, rubber soled shoes
- install proper lighting throughout your home – use nightlights
- stay on pathways

- remove clutter, unsecured scatter rugs from walkways in your home
- let the phone ring - use a portable phone, *69, or answering machine
- use a cane, walker or other device if instructed to do so

Proper Lighting

- Always turn on lights before going into a room.
- Replace any burned-out light bulbs immediately.
- Night-lights are inexpensive and invaluable in contributing to visibility at night, especially in hallways, bathrooms and bedrooms.
- Make sure indoor and outdoor walkways are properly lighted, especially at night.



Secure Walkways

- Carpeting should be securely fastened down. Avoid throw rugs. Place non-skid backing on rugs and replace as needed.
- Place bright, contrasting color tape on the top and bottom steps of stairways.
- Keep walkways clear of miscellaneous or misplaced objects, especially cords from lights or telephones.
- Don't take shortcuts off established walkways; they can be dangerous.
- Be alert to pets and children who can move quickly and unexpectedly.
- Clean up all spills immediately.

Bathroom Safety

- Install and use tightly fastened grab bars in the bathtub/shower and on the wall next to the tub/shower when possible.
- Install non-slip strips or mats in bathtub/shower. Replace as necessary.
- Grab bars or handrails can be installed by the toilet or use a raised toilet seat with arms.
- Use a bath bench to eliminate need to stand in shower or sit on the floor of tub if this is difficult for you.
- Use a hand held shower to make bathing easier.

Railings

- Install hand rails on outside stair.
- Install hand rails on inside stairs and check to make sure they are not loose.



Footwear

- Wear footwear with soles and heels that provide good support and traction between your feet and the surface you walk on.
- Avoid wearing on socks, smooth-soled shoes, or slippers on stairs, wood or waxed floors.

Wet, Slippery or Unfamiliar Uneven Surfaces

- Pay attention to the surface you are walking on: be alert for ice, snow, wet or dry leaves, moss covered stone paths or steps.
- When you get out of a car, be sure to test the surface for wetness or iciness before

standing up and walking.

- Be careful on tile or marble floors.

General Safety

- When visiting mends, be alert to possible hazards, as you are in an unfamiliar environment.
- Be alert as you enter and exit any areas that have curbs.
- Be alert when entering or exiting elevators.
- Let the phone ring - don't run to answer it.
- Never climb onto a chair to change a light bulb or reach high objects on shelves. Use a sturdy stool or step ladder or have someone else do it.

Personal Safety

- Have vision and hearing tested regularly and properly corrected.
- Use caution in getting up too quickly after eating, lying down or resting.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the side effect of the drugs you are taking and how they may affect your balance or coordination.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Use a cane, walking stick, or walker to help maintain balance as recommended by your doctor or physical therapist.
- Maintain a regular program of activity.