

HOME SAFETY: PREVENTING FALLS

Check Clutter to prevent tripping and falling

- Keep clutter out of pathways.
- Keep electrical cords out of the flow of traffic.

Check All Rugs, Runners, and Mats to prevent slipping or tripping

- Rugs and runners tend to slide. Double-faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber mats can be used to prevent rugs from sliding. Tack down carpet edges to avoid tripping.
- Watch your step as you move to different surfaces.

Check the telephone so you can get help

- Locate a telephone where it is accessible in the event of an accident that leaves you unable to stand.
- Consider buying a cordless phone to keep with you as you move about.
- Post emergency numbers near the phone.
- Consider using a medical alert call button system. It is a good safety feature to have.

Check the Cupboards and Closets to ensure safe storage

- Organize cupboards and closets. Place frequently used items on shelves between waist and shoulder level. Then you don't have to climb or stoop and risk a fall.
- If you need to reach a high shelf, use a sturdy step stool.
- Avoid hyper-extending (arching back) your neck to reach high items. You may become dizzy or fall.

Check the Bathroom to prevent slips and falls

- Equip bathtubs and showers with non-skid mats and adhesive strips to prevent slipping.
- Install grab bars. They help you get in and out of the tub or shower safely. They also help prevent falls.
- Locate a light switch (a glowing switch that can be seen in the dark) near the entrance of the bathroom. Night lights are helpful too.
- Try sitting on a shower bench to bathe.

Check the Bedroom to prevent tripping hazards

- Locate lamps, switches, or night lights close to each bed and use them when getting up at night.
- Keep a telephone beside the bed.

Check Stairs and Passageways to prevent trips and falls

- Be sure that stairs and hallways are well lighted and free of clutter to reduce the risk of tripping,
- Handrails should be on both sides of the stairways for support.
- Avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled shoes or slippers to avoid slipping and falling; wear well-fitting shoes with low heels instead.
- To prevent stumbling, carry small loads that do not block your vision and allow you a free hand.

Check pets are not in your way!

Check yourself for dizziness before you start to move; stand up slowly and walk carefully.