



Home Safety Checklist

Making Your Home a Safe Home

Your home is your haven. Make it as safe and fall-free as possible, so you keep your independence and good health. Here is a list of tips to help prevent accidents at home. Check off each suggestion as it is completed. Many are easy and inexpensive changes that can be done with the help of a family member or friend. Keep in mind that these are only a few of the preventive measures that can be taken to make your home safe. For more information on home safety, check with your library. Your home's safety is in your hands. Make it the secure, safe haven it's meant to be.

Safe Lighting

- Make sure outside stairs, walkways and entrances have good lighting.
- Ensure stairways have light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Keep a nightlight in the bathroom.
- Keep hallways well lit, especially from bedroom to bathroom.
- Install a switch just outside each door so you don't walk into a dark room.

Walkways and Hallways

- Keep outside walks clear of snow, ice and leaves, and don't leave items on walks.
- Ensure outside walks are level, or have sturdy, easy-to-grip railings. Also, make sure they are free from cracks and holes.
- Keep hallways clear of unnecessary furniture and other items.
- Make sure carpets lie flat.
- Use nonskid wax (or no wax at all) on polished floors.

Safe and Sound Stairways

- Make sure you can see the outline of each step as you go down (avoid carpets with busy patterns; avoid shag carpets and deep piles).
- Ensure you can wrap your entire hand around your railings.
- Make sure secure railings are installed on outside and inside stairways.
- Have railings secured on both sides of stairs.
- Keep stairways clear and in good repair.
- Ensure stairways have even surfaces with no metal strips or rubber mats that can trip you.
- Mark the edge of steps with yellow tape if your vision is decreased.

General Room Safety

- Remove scatter rugs and carpet runners from floors.
- Ensure walkways are clear of tripping hazards such as low furniture, toys, and electrical and telephone cords. These should be taped to edges of walls or overhead.
- Have a phone easily accessible in every room.
- Use nonskid wax (or no wax) when polishing floors without carpeting.

Bedroom

- Put a phone, flashlight and easy-to-read clock on a sturdy night stand next to the bed.
- Place a night stand or something sturdy next to the bed to help you get in and out.
- Have emergency phone numbers readily available and easy to read.
- Adjust bed height so that feet lie flat on the floor when seated on the edge of the bed.

Bathroom

- Set the water temperature so it's not too hot. Set at or below the 120 degree setting on the water heater.
- Remove unnecessary items from the floor and edge of the tub.
- Place nonslip mats on the inside and outside of the tub.
- Ensure the bathroom floor is not slippery and has no loose rugs or tiles.
- Purchase a chair/stool with nonslip tips on the legs for in the tub when balance, fatigue or weakness are a concern.
- Install grab bars in the side of the tub or into a wall stud above the tub so that a towel bar, soap dish, faucet, or shower curtain are not aiding your balance.
- Ensure the toilet is easy to get on or off. If not, raise the seat or install handrails.

Kitchen

- Make sure any mats or carpets have a slip-resistant backing.
- Put regularly used items within easy reach so no climbing is needed.
- Add good lighting around the stove, sink and counters if needed.
- Turn pot handles toward the center or back of the stove while cooking.
- Keep clothes, towels and curtains or other items that could catch fire away from the toaster, stove and heaters.
- Set timers as reminders of foods cooking on the stove.

Fire Safety

- Place space heaters at least three feet from all curtains and furniture.
- Move electric cords so they are not under carpets where they can fray and become a fire hazard.
- Ensure an adequate number of smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are installed, placed correctly and have fresh batteries (replace yearly).
- Test smoke detectors monthly.
- NEVER smoke in bed.
- Keep a fire extinguisher within reach in the kitchen.
- Make a plan to get out of the house fast in case of a fire emergency.

For a free physician referral, visit **MedStarMontgomery.org** or call **888-376-8881**.