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*We're all about the Care!*

## PREPARING THE HOME

It is reported that accidents are the fifth leading cause of death for elders, not to mention all the additional injuries and complications arising from accidents. **Half the deaths are due to falls, and over 75% of those falls are due to causes that could have been prevented!**

With that in mind, remember to do the following safety and aids check list: (Use the Prepare the home form)

1. **Are the outside grounds clean and hazard free?** Look for objects that can easily trip someone such as: cords, curbs, cracks, rugs, mats, ice, rocks, steps, etc. In the case where a wheel chair is used, or maybe anticipated, make sure the entrances are wide enough to accommodate same. In some cases, ramps will also be needed for easier access.
2. **Are inside floors clean and hazard free?** Remove loose rugs, clutter, raised ridges and any cords crossing a walkway. Stairways should be easily seen; consider putting brightly colored non-skid adhesive strips on the edge of each step. Have sturdy hand railing, and something extra to mark the top and bottom step. (Most step-related accidents happen on the first or bottom step.)
3. **Is there adequate lighting?** Make sure there is proper lighting throughout the house. Use 100 watt bulbs or stronger and make sure dark spaces can be easily illuminated upon entering. Switches should be marked for easy recognition and placed at shoulder height and/or eye level for easy reach.
4. **How safe is the bedroom?** Beds should be at a proper height. A height that is low enough to sit on comfortably while getting into the bed, yet high enough as to allow for easy standing. For care recipients with mobility problems, there are bedside commodes or bedpans. Consider a solid table next to the bed to hold and store necessary items close by and to provide leverage if there is difficulty getting out of bed. Eliminate any sharp corners on the table by padding or covering them. For the person that has difficulty getting out of bed, there are a variety of aids such as an over-hanging grab bar, an electric hospital bed, and there are stands that slide over the bed. A phone next to the bed is highly recommended in case of emergency, preferably with large speed dial buttons.
5. **How safe is the bathroom?** The bathroom is a danger zone. This is where most precautions have to be taken. The tub should have non-skid adhesive strips on the bottom and a non-skid mat or adhesive strips on the floor next to it. For those who still shower there are a variety of tub chairs, aids and grab bars assist getting in and out. For the toilet there maybe a need for grab bars to sit and stand, and you might consider getting a toilet raiser so to not have to sit down as far. Also there are accessories such as a bathroom tray that goes across the tub, and bath pillows to support head and upper back.

6. **How safe is the living room?** This is an area that (if conditions allow) the person spends most of their waking hours. Most people have a specific chair they sit in. Make sure the chair is stable and easy to get in and out of. It should provide proper posture support. Many health problems are attributed to poor posture. There are a variety of chairs, suitable even ones that have a lift for those who have a difficult time getting out of a chair. Consider a solid table next to the chair to hold and store necessary items close by and to provide leverage if there is difficulty getting out of the chair. A phone next to the chair is highly recommended in case of emergency, preferably with large speed dial buttons.
7. **How safe is the dining room?** As all other spaces, the dining room should be uncluttered. Select chairs that are light, sturdy, and not too low!
8. **How safe is the kitchen?** Keep kitchen clean and uncluttered. Make it as roomy as possible. Arrange things to limit having to bend, reach, and stand for long periods. Keep items in low easily reachable selves or cabinets. Transporting food from point A to point B can be difficult. A cart to wheel dishes, utensils and food is a great idea. Devices for extended reach and firmer grasp should be considered. Consider a short-sleeve shirt to be worn when cooking to avoid burning clothing to be left next to the apron.
9. **Make sure following systems and equipment are all in good working condition?** Electrical systems, heating systems, cooling systems, plumbing systems, water heater temperature (110 degrees Fahrenheit or less recommended, prevents scalding)

**Make sure there is no health hazard:** Check for some of the following items: asbestos, natural gas, polluted water, toxic chemicals, loose wiring.

**What aids will better assist with their activities of daily living?** Take a look at a local medical supply store to get an idea of the multitude of aids available to our elders.

Within our elder care guide, you will find forms to help you both in your daily life, and to help you prepare for a loved one's stay and/or convalescing. Visit our website at [www.advantagepluscaregivers.com](http://www.advantagepluscaregivers.com) and you'll find all our helpful forms, links to referral sites for doctors and repair-people, and companies where you can purchase everything from wheelchairs to food supplements. Our website has been created to help you in all your care needs! Or, you can call us and one of our caring staff will be happy to assist you!