

## Fall Hazards Home Safety Checklist

You can help prevent falls after you leave the hospital by doing these:

- Learn more about your medications and how they interact. Some medicines can make you drowsy or light-headed, which may lead to falls. Talk with your physician and/or pharmacist about your medications to make sure you know how to best prevent falls.
- Wear slippers and shoes with non-skid soles when walking.
- Have your vision checked and use prescription glasses or contact lenses as needed. Vision problems can increase your chance of falling.
- Talk with your physician about an exercise program to improve your strength, coordination and flexibility.
- Take steps to make your living areas safer.

This is a room-by-room checklist that highlights possible fall hazards in your home. If you check off any of these questions, use the suggestions to help reduce your chances of falling.

### Bathroom

- Is the path from your bedroom to the bathroom dark?
  - Add nightlights to help light the path so you can see.
- Do you use towel racks to balance or grab onto while getting into or out of the shower or bathtub?
  - Install grab bars inside your shower or bathtub that will support your weight. Towel racks may not be mounted well enough to support your weight.
- Is it hard to stand during a shower?
  - Add a shower seat so you can shower without getting tired or risk falling because of dizziness.
- Is your shower floor and/or bathtub slippery?
  - Install non-skid strips or a non-slip mat.
- Is there any water on the floor after your bath or shower? Are there leaks from your bathtub or shower?
  - Patch leaks with caulk or call a repair service.
  - Wipe up water right away to prevent slipping.
  - Use a bath mat with a slip-resistant backing.

- Do you need to reach far or turn around to get your towels, shampoo and soap?
  - Attach a storage unit to the side of your bathtub or shower wall. This will keep your supplies close by and easy to reach.
- Is it hard to get on and off the toilet?
  - Use a raised toilet seat.
  - Install handrails near the toilet.

## Bedroom

- Is a lamp near your bed hard to reach?
  - Move the lamp closer to your bed so it is within reach. Or, attach a light to your headboard to reduce your chances of falling out of bed.
- Do you need to get out of bed to reach your phone or glasses?
  - Use a longer telephone cord or cordless phone, or keep your cell phone within easy reach of your bed.
  - Keep your glasses close by so you can reach them.
- Are there phone, light or TV cords running along the floor in the walkways?
  - Reroute cords so they do not run through walkways. Or, get an electrician to install more outlets. Cords are a tripping hazard.
- Are there clothes, shoes, books and/or other clutter on the floor?
  - Remove clutter from walkways to reduce your chances of tripping.
- Do you get up many times during the night to use the bathroom?
  - Try using a portable toilet near your bed so you do not have to walk to the bathroom.

## Kitchen

- Are there loose floor mats or rugs in the kitchen?
  - Remove any loose floor mats or rugs.
- Do you need to reach far, bend over or climb on a stool to get commonly used kitchen items or foods?
  - Rearrange your cupboards and drawers so the items you use the most are kept in waist-high spaces.
  - Use a sturdy step stool with a grab bar to reach items stored overhead.
  - Do not use a chair as a step stool.
- Is there liquid, food, grease and/or clutter on the floor?
  - Keep floor surfaces clean and dry.
  - Sweep often.
  - Wipe up spills right away so you do not slip.

## Living areas

- Do your carpets, rugs and floor coverings have frayed corners or rolled-up edges?
  - Remove damaged floor coverings or secure them well with double-sided tape or nails. It is important to have flat, sturdy walkways for safety.
- Are there throw rugs in the walkways?
  - Remove loose throw rugs for your safety.
- Are any of your chairs or couches low to the ground?
  - Use higher seats with higher armrests to get into and out of from a sitting position.
- Do you have to get up to answer the phone?
  - Keep a phone nearby so you do not have to get up quickly if it rings.
  - Keep a cordless phone nearby.
  - Attach your cell phone to a lanyard and wear it . Or, always keep your cellphone in your pocket so it is handy at all times, even if you fall.
- Do you have to walk over or around electrical cords or wires?
  - Reroute cords so they do not run through walkways. Or, get an electrician to install additional outlets. Cords are a tripping hazard.
- Are there newspapers, boxes, shoes and/or other clutter on the floor?
  - Remove clutter from walkways to reduce your chances of tripping.
- Do you need to walk around furniture to get through your living area?
  - Rearrange furniture so there are clear, straight paths for walking through rooms.
- Are you often alone?
  - Consider wearing an alarm device that will alert help in case you have a fall or an emergency.
  - Attach your cell phone to a lanyard and wear it. Or, always keep your cellphone in your pocket so it is handy at all times, even if you fall.
- Do you have to reach up to pull cords on lights or ceiling fans?
  - Install longer cords or link ceiling fans and lights to a light switch on the wall so you do not have to reach.

## Stairs

- Are any steps broken or uneven?
  - Fix all loose or broken steps.

- Is the carpet on your steps loose or torn?
  - Remove or reattach any carpet that is loose or torn. Carpet should be firmly attached to every step.
  
- Are the handrails loose or broken? Is the handrail on only 1 side of the stairs?
  - Repair loose handrails. For safety, handrails should be on both sides of the stairs for the full length of the stairway.

### **Where to buy safety equipment**

You can buy safety equipment from a medical/surgical supply store, your local pharmacy or a hardware store. If the equipment is too expensive, ask your clinician for other options.

If you have any questions or concerns, ask your clinician.