

What is involved in making the home environment safe?

When caring at home for an ill, aging or disabled person of any age, it's important to consider the safety of the home environment. This list isn't all inclusive, but is a good start. The following checklist may be printed and used for home inspection.

Upstairs

- Install a smoke detector in the hallway outside of bedrooms. Check and change batteries regularly.
- Place a nonskid bath mat on the floor and a nonskid mat in the tub.
- Store all prescription and over-the-counter medicines in original containers and in a safe place.
- Use paper cups in bathroom to avoid spread of germs.
- To avoid scalding, make certain the tap water temperature is set no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Be sure you can move safely in the bathroom and in and out of the tub or shower.
- Mount grab bars at the toilet, bath and shower on walls with secure reinforcements.
- Both sides of the steps should have handrails.
- Make sure lighting in hallways and on stairs is adequate.
- Place a lamp and telephone near your bed.

Downstairs

- Store all cleaning supplies in their original containers.
- Turn pot handles inward when cooking on the stove to avoid spills. Use back burners whenever possible.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
- Secure area rugs to prevent falls and slips.
- Make sure furniture is securely placed and in good repair.
- Install light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.

Outdoors

- Keep stairs and walkways clear of snow, wet leaves or other debris.
- Repair cracks or chips in cement sidewalks and stairs.



- __ Make certain railings, gates and fences are secure and in good repair.
- __ If you have a fireplace, wood burning stove, or other heat source, place barriers around it to avoid burns.
- __ Have chimneys and stovepipes inspected and cleaned regularly.
- __ Make certain that hazardous items, such as bug sprays, cleaners, auto care products, and weed killers, are secured and in their original containers in the garage, utility room, or basement.

Further Precautions

- __ Make sure rugs and carpets are secure to prevent trips and falls.
- __ Post emergency numbers in easy-to-read type near each telephone in your house.
- __ Make certain bathrooms and bedrooms can be unlocked from the outside.
- __ Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- __ Make sure the home has at least two unobstructed exits in case of fire or other emergency.
- __ Check all electrical cords to make sure they are not cracked or frayed.
- __ Make certain outlets or extension cords are not overloaded.
- __ Avoid using space heaters. If they are used, make sure they are in safe condition. Never plug them into an extension cord. Don't place them near drapes or furnishings.
- __ Know the locations of the gas, electricity and water cut-off valves in your home in case of emergency.

