

Safety in the *Home*

Helpful tips to lower your risk
of accidents



ChristianaCare™
HomeHealth



Each year four out of every 10 people over the age of 65 will fall.

Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall.

Often these falls happen at home and can lead to serious injury. The good news is that many of these incidents can be prevented.

ChristianaCare wants to help you make your home a safer place. Please use these tips to help prevent accidental falls in your home..

Adapting Your Home

It may be necessary to change the environment to make your home easier and safer to navigate. Below is a guide to help you evaluate your home for safety risks.

Place a **checkmark** next to items that apply to your home situation.

Please note: All checkmarks indicate a possible safety risk and should be corrected immediately.



Front/Rear and Garage Entry

- Do you need assistance to enter or exit your home?
- Are there steps that don't have railings?
- Are the sidewalks uneven and/or slippery?
- Are there light switches far away from the doors?
- Are the light switches out of your reach?
- Do the inside doors swing out over the steps?
- Are shrubs growing too close to the entrance?



Stairways

- Are there hazards such as shoes, toys, etc., on the stairways?
- Are full length handrails missing or broken?
- Are the stairways dark?
- Are treads, risers and carpeting loose, broken or slippery?
- Is a light switch missing from either the top or the bottom of the stairs?



Living Room/Family Room

- Are floor coverings difficult to walk over?
- Are door thresholds uneven?
- Are the doors too narrow or are they blocked in some way?
- Do you have trouble operating the door handles and knobs?
- Are electrical switches and outlets out of your reach?
- Are windows inaccessible?
- Are electrical cords covering or laying across walkways?
- Are scatter rugs unsecured?
- Is your furniture arranged in a way that makes it difficult to move around freely?
- Do you need assistance to get up from your sofa or chair?
- Does your furniture slip on the floor?

SAFETY TIPS:

Entryways:

- Have a qualified individual install a ramp.
- A single step should have a grab bar for support.

Stairways:

- Place a railing on both sides of stairways.

Living Room:

- Consider changing round door knobs to lever handles.
- Consider a chair with arms for added safety.
- Use non-skid pads for furniture on hard wood floors.
- All cords should be placed along walls not under rugs or across walking areas.

Adapting Your Home

SAFETY TIPS:

Kitchen:

- Keep all pot handles turned inward on stove.
- Place items frequently used within easy reach.
- Never stand on a chair to reach a high shelf.
- Place milk in small pitchers so it is easier to carry.

Bathroom:

- Leave bathroom door unlocked.
- Never use a towel bar for support.
- Consider a shower chair or hand held shower.
- Remove clutter from all surfaces.

Bedroom:

- Keep a bell at your bedside to call for help.
- Close doors and drawers after use.
- Place frequently used clothing in top drawers of dresser for easier access.

Laundry:

- Consider moving your washer/dryer out of the basement.
- Consider using a laundry bag with a shoulder strap rather than a basket.



Kitchen

- Is it difficult to move freely?
- Are the stove burner controls in an unsafe position?
- Is it difficult or unsafe for you to open and close the oven?
- Are oven mitts/potholders too far away from the stove?
- Are dishes/glasses/utensils difficult to reach?
- Are your pots and pans unmanageable?
- Is the counter too high for you?
- Is the counter cluttered or difficult to use?
- Is it difficult to reach or use the sink and faucets?
- Is the table cluttered or difficult to reach?
- Do you need assistance to open/close the refrigerator?
- Do you have difficulty carrying items to the table/counter/other room?



Bathroom

- Is the door too narrow, blocked or otherwise difficult to get through?
- Is there too little space to transfer on/off toilet?
- Is the height of the toilet adequate, too high or too low?
- Is it hard to access the sink and faucet?
- Is the mirror too high or too low?
- Is there too little room to get in/out of the tub?
- Are grab bars missing?
- Is the floor surface of the tub/shower slippery?
- Is it too difficult to stand long enough to complete your shower?
- Are items in the linen closet difficult to reach?



Bedroom

- Is the door too narrow, blocked or otherwise difficult to get through?
- Is the bed crowded so that you can't get around it?
- Does the furniture make it difficult to move freely?
- Is the closet inaccessible?
- Is it difficult to access items in the drawers?

Adapting Your Home

- Is it difficult to get into or out of your bed safely?
- Does the bed slip on the floor?
- Is it hard for you to manage the bed covers once in bed?
- Do you have trouble getting to the toilet in the middle of the night?
- Are you unable to reach a lamp or flashlight while in bed?
- Is the room missing a sturdy armchair where you can sit to dress?



Laundry

- Is the laundry area difficult to get to?
- Are you unable to move clothes from your washer to dryer safely?



General Tips

This list applies to all rooms in your home.

- Keep a cell phone or cordless phone near you at all times.
- Be sure all hallway and stairway areas are brightly lit.
- Remove all clutter (boxes, stacks of magazines, toys, extra furniture).
- Get rid of all throw (scatter) rugs. Tack down loose or torn carpet.
- Use non-skid backing on all area rugs including bathroom throw rugs.
- Use non-slip wax on floors.
- Apply red safety tape to the changes in surface levels (steps, thresholds) so they are easier to see.
- Be sure lighting is adequate. Install night lights or motion detector lights in commonly used areas (hallways, stairways, bathrooms, bedrooms).
- Keep electrical and telephone cords out of walkways.
- Be aware of pets that can get under foot.
- Consider a personal emergency response system.
- Keep important phone numbers close to all phones and a phone close to your bed for emergencies.
- Consult a professional before investing in medical equipment.
- Clean up spills and wet surfaces immediately.

Need Additional Information On Making Your Home Safe?

If you feel additional information or an expert opinion is needed, you may be eligible for an in-home safety evaluation by a physical or occupational therapist. Please contact ChristianaCare HomeHealth at 1-888-862-0001.

SAFETY TIPS:

Medications

- Be sure your doctor has a complete list of all the medications you are taking including herbal and natural products.
- Check with your doctor if your medication causes you to feel dizzy or light headed. Exercise caution when moving from a seated to standing position. Some medications may place you at a higher risk for falls (examples: heart, blood pressure, sleeping and water pills).
- Keep your medicine list with you at all times. Place this list close to your telephone in case of an emergency.

Clothing

- Clean your eyeglass lenses frequently and keep fresh batteries in your hearing aid.
- Wear short garments or pants rather than long dresses and robes.
- Wear low or no-heel shoes that fit well. Wear sturdy slippers that have a back (not slip-ons) and non-skid soles..
- Try using shoes with elastic laces or Velcro closures.

ChristianaCare HomeHealth understands the healing power of home.

Since 1922, ChristianaCare HomeHealth has been the leader in caring for people where they feel most comfortable – at home. Just one phone call will connect you to a full range of professional and support services statewide: 1-888-862-0001.



ChristianaCare HomeHealth
New Castle County Corporate Headquarters
One Read's Way, Suite 100
New Castle, DE 19720
302-327-5200

Kent and Sussex County Office
2116 S. DuPont Hwy., Suite 2
Camden, DE 19934
302-698-4300 (Kent)
302-855-9700 (Sussex)

ChristianaCare is a private nonprofit regional health care system and relies in part on the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations to fulfill its mission. To learn more about how you can support our mission, please visit: christianacare.org/donors.