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Fall Prevention Starts at Home

More than 25% of adults age 65 and older experience a fall each year. After one fall, the risk of falling again doubles. Some falls result in serious injuries, such as hip fractures or traumatic brain injuries. The good news is that many falls can be prevented, and there are steps you can take today to reduce your risk.

Many older adults develop a fear of falling, and in some cases, that fear can actually increase the likelihood of a fall by causing people to become less active or more cautious in ways that affect balance and mobility. Because many falls occur in and around the home, one of the most important things you can do is conduct a home safety check.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends reviewing your home for common fall hazards. Use the checklist below to identify areas that may need attention.

Stairs and Steps

- Remove papers, shoes, books, and other clutter from stairs and walkways.
- Repair broken or uneven steps.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting and a light switch at both the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs promptly.
- Repair loose or torn carpeting.
- Ensure handrails are sturdy and extend the full length of the staircase.

Floors

- Remove throw rugs or secure them with non-slip backing or double-sided tape.
- Arrange furniture to create clear walking paths.
- Pick up items that could become tripping hazards.
- Secure electrical cords and wires along walls or behind furniture.

Kitchen

- Store frequently used items on lower shelves where they are easy to reach.
- Use a sturdy step stool with a handrail when reaching high places. Never stand on a chair.

Bedroom

- Place a lamp within easy reach of the bed.
- Install night lights to illuminate the path between the bedroom and bathroom.
- Keep floors clear of shoes, cords, and other obstacles.

Bathroom

- Place non-slip rubber mats or self-stick strips in the tub and shower.
- Install grab bars near the toilet and bathtub or shower.
- Consider using a shower chair if standing for long periods is difficult.

Making a few simple changes can significantly reduce your risk of falling and help you maintain your independence. This fall, take a few minutes to walk through your home and identify potential hazards. A safer home today can help prevent a serious fall tomorrow.