Home Safety Checklist

for older adults

Minnesota Department of Health
Injury and Violence Prevention Unit
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Injuries that happen in the home are a serious problem for older adults. The purpose of this checklist is to point out some of the hazards in a home that could result in injuries. Simply go through your home using this checklist as a guide. If you answer “yes” to the questions, you have already taken steps to protect yourself. If you answer “no,” you need to make some changes to improve the safety of your home.

If you have questions about this checklist, call the Injury and Violence Prevention Unit at the Minnesota Department of Health, (612) 623-5682.
KITCHEN

1. Are small appliances unplugged and put away when not in use? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Are pot handles turned toward the back of the stove while cooking? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Is microwave properly used and is food tested for temperature before eating? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Are cleaning supplies stored separately from food? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Are electric appliances kept away from the sink and stove? Yes ☐ No ☐
6. Are electrical cords in safe condition (not frayed, spliced or overloaded)?

   Yes ☐
   No ☐

7. Do you wear close-fitting sleeves while cooking to prevent clothing fires?

   Yes ☐
   No ☐

8. Is a large cooking pan cover kept within easy reach of the stove to be used to extinguish cooking fires?

   Yes ☐
   No ☐
9. Do you reduce your risk of slipping by wiping up grease, water and other spilled liquids or foods immediately?  
   Yes □  No □

10. Are step stools and ladders sturdy and safe? (Safe step stools have a guard rail to hold onto.)
   Yes □  No □
11. Are frequently used kitchen supplies and food stored in an easy to reach location to avoid climbing and bending?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

12. Do you keep potholders, towels and curtains away from the toaster, stove and heaters?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

13. Do you set a timer to remind yourself of things left cooking on the stove?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐

14. Do you have good lighting around stove, sink and counters?  
   Yes ☐  No ☐
BATHROOM

15. Is the hot water adjusted 110°-120° to prevent tap water scalds? Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Do you turn the tub/shower faucets on and off while standing outside the tub/shower? Yes ☐ No ☐

17. Are electrical appliances (curling iron, hair dryer, electric shaver, space heater) used away from water and unplugged after each use? Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Does your house have a ground fault circuit interrupter outlet? Yes ☐ No ☐
19. Are there non-skid strips or a mat on the floor of the shower or the bathtub?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

20. Are there grab bars or a raised seat if you have difficulty getting on and off the toilet?  
Yes ☐  No ☐

21. Are well-secured grab bars installed in the shower or tub?  
Yes ☐  No ☐
22. Do you keep towels, shampoo and soap within easy reach?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

23. Do you avoid using bath oil or creams that would make the tub slippery?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

24. Is the floor safe, not slippery (no loose rugs or loose tiles)?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
BEDROOM

25. Is there a working flashlight within easy reach of the bed?  
    Yes □  
    No □

26. Is there a telephone within easy reach of the bed?  
    Yes □  
    No □

27. Do you have a nightlight or bright light for your path to the bathroom?  
    Yes □  
    No □
LIVING AREAS

28. Are walkways in rooms, halls, stairways and outdoor areas unobstructed and well lit? Yes □ No □

29. Are carpets, rugs and other floor coverings in good repair and well-secured? Yes □ No □

30. Are rubber-backed, non-skid rugs and non-skid floor waxes used? Yes □ No □

31. Are casters or rollers on chairs, rickety tables and furniture with sharp corners removed? Yes □ No □
32. Are stairs, walls, railings, porches and balconies sturdy and in good repair? Yes ☐ No ☐

33. Do stairways have secure handrails? Yes ☐ No ☐

34. Is there a light within easy reach when entering each room? Yes ☐ No ☐

35. Are guns or rifles and ammunition stored safely? (Guns should be stored unloaded, with guns and ammunition in separate, locked cabinets.) Yes ☐ No ☐
36. Is your fireplace or wood burning stove in safe condition? (Stove, stovepipe and chimney should be inspected yearly.)

Yes ☐ No ☐
37. Do you have a working smoke detector properly placed:

- one on each level of the home,
- near each sleeping area,
- on the ceiling,
- no closer than 6 inches from the wall, OR
- between 6 and 12 inches from the ceiling and at least 6 inches from the corner?
38. Do your space heater, furnace and stove have 36 inches of surrounding space, free from things that can burn?  

Yes ☐  No ☐

39. Are electrical cords in safe condition (not frayed, spliced or overloaded)?

Yes ☐  No ☐

40. Are there at least two ways to get out of your house or apartment in case of fire or other emergency?

Yes ☐  No ☐
41. Do you know the symptoms and how to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- install a carbon monoxide detector;

- provide adequate ventilation for furnace, space heaters and fireplaces;

- do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat; and

- do not operate gas-powered engines in confined areas?
SAFETY PRACTICES

42. Do you have 911, poison control and other emergency numbers near the telephone? Yes ☐ No ☐

43. Do you wear your seatbelt when riding in motor vehicles? Yes ☐ No ☐

44. Do you wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes that have good traction (rubber or corrugated soles)? Yes ☐ No ☐

45. Do you have a plan for getting help easily in an emergency? Yes ☐ No ☐
46. If you take over-the-counter or prescription medication, do you:

- store medications in the containers they come in,
- have a way to organize your medications (a pill box),
- keep a current list of your medications and carry it with you,
- fill your prescriptions at the same pharmacy,
- have good lighting to see your medication?
47. If you smoke, do you: Yes □ No □
   • use large, deep ashtrays and empty ashes and butts in a covered metal container,
   • avoid smoking in bed, and
   • avoid smoking while on medication that can make you drowsy or while using alcohol?

48. Do you test your smoke detectors monthly and replace the batteries at least once a year? Yes □ No □
49. Do you have a fire escape plan that includes:
   - sleeping with the bedroom doors closed,
   - two ways out,
   - staying below smoke,
   - going to a meeting place outside, and
   - calling 911 to report a fire?

50. Have you practiced your fire escape plan?
    Yes □
    No □
51. Are poisonous materials (cleaning supplies, household chemicals, automotive products), gasoline and other flammable liquids stored in original or UL approved containers?  
   Yes ☐  
   No ☐

52. If children visit, have you child-proofed your home? (Use the Home Safety Checklist for Young Children.)  
   Yes ☐  
   No ☐
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TDD: Minnesota Relay Service, 1-800-627-3529.

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