

# Some tips to help senior adults prevent falls.



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With fall-related deaths among people 65 or older increasing at more than twice the rate of fall deaths among those younger than 65, this is an area where today's senior adults are particularly vulnerable.<sup>1</sup> When seniors fall, the cause can often be traced to one of two main factors, environment or personal health. In both cases, there are things you and residents can do to help reduce the likelihood of fall-related injury or death.

## Practical advice to help create a safe environment.

Here are some measures you can and should take to help protect your senior adult residents from fall-related accidents and injuries:

- Install secure handrails and bright lights with switches at the top and bottom of all stairways
- Repair loose or uneven steps; check stairs for worn or loose carpeting and consider installing anti-slip treads
- Remove throw rugs, as they present a trip hazard; if rugs are needed, they should be non-skid or be secured to the floor with adhesive
- Have a licensed contractor install grab bars for the toilet, bathtub and/or shower; use non-slip mats or decals on all ceramic surfaces
- Make sure all outside access walks and inside hallways are well-lit and clear of debris
- Store items frequently used by residents on lower shelves to limit the use of stools or stepladders; if stepladders must be used, provide a podium stepladder with a bar to hold onto
- Secure any loose cords or wires so they don't present a trip hazard
- Avoid using wax coating on floors to help prevent a slippery surface
- Post evacuation directions in hallways for safe navigation in emergencies

## Steps seniors can take to help protect themselves.

As people age, even what seems to be a minor hazard can result in a severe injury. When senior residents live on their own for all or part of each day, taking the following steps can help them create a safe living space.

- Exercise regularly, according to your abilities
- Rise slowly after eating, sitting or lying down to help avoid dizziness and loss of balance

## Senior Adult Safety

- Keep all medications, prescription or over-the-counter, in their original containers; if medicines must be transferred to different containers, make sure directions and expiration dates are clearly noted
- Post the National Poison Control Hotline and other emergency numbers next to all phones for quick access
- Schedule yearly eye exams to ensure vision is corrected with the right eyewear, and so the doctor can diagnose any conditions that may limit vision
- Position lamps close to chairs and beds so they can be turned on and off easily
- Make sure shoes and walking aids are always properly fitted or adjusted prior to use
- Consider purchasing a wearable medical alert system device to summon help if an accident occurs
- Position night-lights in bathrooms and other places you walk in the middle of the night, and keep a flashlight next to your bed



Encourage residents to keep all medications, prescription or over-the-counter, in their original containers.

### What property owners should do when an injury occurs.

Injuries can range from low-impact spills not requiring immediate medical attention to serious falls resulting in head and neck injuries, broken bones and/or open wounds. Whenever one of your residents or a visitor to your property suffers a slip and fall injury:

- **Immediately check the condition of the injured person.** Either call an ambulance to take the person to the hospital if the injury is severe, or offer minor first aid if you have a trained first aid person on staff.
- **Have a physician consult on all head injuries.** Signs and symptoms of a concussion can be subtle and may not be readily apparent.<sup>2</sup>
- **Promptly report the injury to the Nationwide® Call Center at 1-800-421-3535.** A quick response by a claims adjuster can help ensure efficient and appropriate claims handling.

<sup>2</sup> *Concussion: Symptoms*, The Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/concussion/basics/symptoms/con-20019272> (downloaded 4/18/16)

Providing solutions  
to help our members  
manage risk.<sup>SM</sup>



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