

Basic Senior Safety Tips

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Each year, many older Americans are injured in and around their homes. The U.S. Consumer and Product Safety Commission estimates that in 1981, over 622,000 people over age 65 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries. There are certain safety tips that Seniors can do to make their home as safe as possible. The following general safety tips are recommended:

- Emergency telephone numbers should be placed near all phones.
- Water temperature should be kept under 120 degrees.
- Purchase rugs with slip resistant backing. Use double faced adhesive carpet tape or rubber matting for the back of rugs and runner.
- Place rubber matting under rugs. (Rubber matting that can be cut to size is available).
- Check rugs, runners, and mats periodically to see if backing needs to be replaced.
- Remove all rugs and runners that tend to slide.
- Arrange furniture so that outlets are available for lamps and appliances without the use of extension cords.
- Furniture and other objects should be arranged so they are not in the way for walking through the house.
- Stairways should have light switches at the top and bottom. Handrails should be tightly fastened on the right side as you face down the stairs.
- If an extension cord is needed, use one having sufficient amp or wattage rating.
- Smoke detectors should be placed near bedrooms either on the ceiling or 6-12 inches below the ceiling on the wall and on every level of your home.
- Check and replace batteries in your smoke detectors according to the manufacturers instructions.
- Don't smoke in bed.
- Never go to bed with a heating pad turned on.
- Replace all burned out light bulbs and use the correct wattage.
- Keep space heaters away from passageways and flammable materials such as curtains, rugs, furniture.
- Use a stool with non-skid tips as a seat while showering or bathing.
- Install night lights, motion lights, or plugs.
- Grab bars should be located in and out of tub, showers, and near toilets.
- Apply textured strips or appliques on the floor of tubs and showers to prevent slipping.
- Dispose of outdated medications.
- Medications should be clearly marked with the contents, doctor's instructions, expiration date, and patient' name.

For additional information, contact your local Outreach and Extension Center or the MU Extension Rural Safety and Health Program at 1.800.995.8503.

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