

# Home Safety & Preventing Accidents

Home accidents are a major cause of injury and death. For those over 60, the risk of death and injury may be greater than for others. *Redi-Nurse* is committed to the prevention of unnecessary home accidents or incidents.

People usually become less agile as they grow older. Their bones tend to become more porous and brittle and can break more easily. A simple fall can result in a serious, disabling injury. For these reasons, older people need to take special precautions to ensure a safe living environment.

Most accidents in the home can be prevented by the elimination of hazards. Use the attached checklists to determine the safety level of your home. Check each statement that applies to your home or to your habits in your home. Then review the unchecked statement to determine what else you can do to make your home a safer place to live.

## Home Checklist

- Emergency Phone numbers are posted by each telephone.
- Electrical appliances and cords are clean and in good condition.
- Electrical equipment bears the Underwriters Labs (UL) label.
- An adequate number of outlets are located in each room where needed. There are no "Octopus" outlets with several plugs used.
- Electrical Outlets are grounded.
- Lighting throughout the house is adequate.
- Burned out lights are replaced.
- The heating system is checked and cleaned regularly by someone qualified to do maintenance. Space heaters, if used, are maintained and used according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Wear secure shoes and clothing. Avoid open shoes.
- Avoid excesses in temperature. Your awareness of heat and cold may be dulled due to medication, the disease itself or the aging process.
- Spills should be cleaned up immediately. Wet floors are a real hazard
- The water heater thermostat is set below 120 degrees F to prevent accidental scalding.
- Prescription Drugs: Always follow directions. Read labels before each use. Store drugs properly. Throw out unused or outdated prescriptions. Only use medications

- prescribed for your use. Check container for open seals or any tampering.
- \_\_\_ Carpeting and rugs are not worn out.
  - \_\_\_ Throw rugs have a nonskid backing and are not placed in traffic areas.
  - \_\_\_ There are exits from all areas of the house.
  - \_\_\_ There is a fire drill/safety plan prepared.
  - \_\_\_ Smoke detectors are in place. Batteries are checked and replaced regularly.
  - \_\_\_ Maintain clear walkways. Remove obstacles in walking paths, maintain furniture arrangements.
  - \_\_\_ Doors are kept locked at all times. Do not open the door to an unfamiliar face. Ask for identification and call their employer to verify.
  - \_\_\_ Do not let door-to-door salesmen into your home. Ask them to come back when a friend or family member will be with you.
  - \_\_\_ Valuables that may be easily stolen should be removed from sight.
  - \_\_\_ Telephone solicitations are not accepted. "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is".
  - \_\_\_ Household maintenance (painting, roofing, etc.) is scheduled with a reputable company. Have a friend or family member assist you.
  - \_\_\_ Hazardous cleaners and chemicals are out of reach of children and confused individuals.
  - \_\_\_ Household appliances are turned off when not being used.
  - \_\_\_ Bath tub or shower has a non-skid mat or strips in the standing area.
  - \_\_\_ Grab bars are installed on the walls by the bath tub or toilet, use bath benches, when appropriate.

### **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT:**

- \_\_\_ The DME Company providing medical equipment will give you instruction on operation, electrical safety, fire hazards, storage and temperature control of equipment. Our staff will assist you with any questions you may have.
- \_\_\_ Manufacturer's instructions for specialized medical equipment are kept with or near the equipment.
- \_\_\_ Routine and preventative maintenance is performed according to the manufacturers instructions.

\_\_\_ Emergency phone numbers are posted by telephone in the home so you can notify the company and obtain necessary assistance in case of equipment problems or equipment failure.

\_\_\_ Manufacturer's instructions are followed for providing a proper environment for specialized medical equipment.

\_\_\_ Adequate electrical power is provided for medical equipment such as ventilators and oxygen concentrators.

\_\_\_ Equipment batteries are checked regularly by a qualified service person.

### **FIRE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:**

\_\_\_ Smoking is not allowed in bed or when oxygen equipment is being used.

\_\_\_ Know your fire escape routes and plan two exits. If your exit is through the ground floor window, make sure it opens easily.

\_\_\_ If you live in an apartment building, know the exit stairs location.

\_\_\_ Keep hallways clean and do not use elevators in a fire emergency.

\_\_\_ Practice zone escape plan.

\_\_\_ In the event of a fire, close the door of the room immediately. Remove yourself from your home and go to a neighbor to call 911.

\_\_\_ If your fire escape is cut off, remain calm, close the door and seal cracks to hold back smoke. Signal for help at the window.

\_\_\_ Always keep the fire department number posted for easy viewing at all times.

\_\_\_ Remember, life safety is first, but if the fire is contained and small, you may be able to use your fire extinguisher until the fire department arrives.

\_\_\_ Fire extinguisher should be checked frequently for stability.

\_\_\_ Install smoke alarms and check batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings time in the spring and fall.

### **OXYGEN EQUIPMENT SAFETY:**

\_\_\_ Keep all Oxygen equipment away from open flame.

\_\_\_ Do not smoke around Oxygen.

\_\_\_ Do not allow Oxygen to freeze or overheat.

\_\_\_ Register with your local utility if you have electrically powered equipment such as Oxygen or Ventilator.

**POWER OUTAGE:**

In case of a power outage, if you require assistance and our agency phone lines are down, do the following:

\_\_\_ If you are in a crisis or have an emergency situation, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

\_\_\_ If it is not an emergency, but you need assistance, call your closest relative or neighbor.