

# Preventing falls at home

**We want to help keep you safe. Below are some tips for your home to keep you safe.**

## **Bathroom safety**

- Use a raised toilet seat.
- Install grab bars in your shower and by the toilet.
- Use a non-skid mat in the bathtub.
- Place a bath bench in the shower.
- Use a hand-held shower head.
- Replace bar soap with liquid soap in plastic bottles.
- Make sure faucets and towel bars are easy to reach.
- Lower your water temperature to 120 degrees to avoid burns.

## **Bedroom safety**

- Install side rails on your bed, if indicated.
- Keep hospital beds in the low position.
- Obtain an over-bed trapeze so you can lift yourself.
- Use a bedside commode at night.
- Place lamps or light switches within reach of your bed.
- Keep your telephone at your bedside while in bed.

## **Kitchen safety**

- Mop up spills and remove debris on floors immediately.
- Store utensils, paper towels, food and frequently used objects within reach.
- Avoid using step stools or chairs to reach things.
- Never hold onto moving refrigerator doors for support.
- Slide items along your counter instead of carrying them.
- Install grab bars on the walls.
- Store heavy pots at waist level or close to the floor.

## **Walking**

- Wear supportive/non-skid shoes.
- Use extra caution with slippery surfaces.
- Be aware of the oxygen cord position while moving.
- If you have a foley catheter, be aware of your bag positioning.
- Rise slowly after eating, sleeping or bathing, as this may prevent dizziness due to a drop in blood pressure.
- Back up to a chair or bed until you feel it behind both legs before sitting.
- Be aware of pets and never attempt to step over them. They may blend in with the floor and be a tripping hazard.
- Use caution with leashes.

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### **Walking and/or activity restrictions**

- Use support when walking or moving from place to place.
- Use equipment, when needed, for walking.
- Do not walk without assistance.
- Do not lift heavy objects.
- Stay within the support of the four legs of a walker when you use it.
- Keep a walker or a cane with you at all times. Never walk away from it.
- Use wheelchair brakes before standing.

### **Stairs**

- Install handrails on stairs (make sure railings are secure).
- Consider marking stairs with bright strips of tape to outline changes in elevation.
- Build or purchase a ramp.

### **All rooms**

- Use a cordless phone.
- Post phone numbers on or near the phone.
- Use baby monitors or two-way radio for communication.
- Keep telephone and electrical cords tacked to floor baseboards or out of pathways.
- Clear cords, clutter and pathways to allow passage ease and do not block exits.
- Eliminate or pad corners of furniture that have sharp edges or angles.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Tack down carpet edges.
- Repair, replace or remove torn, worn or frayed carpeting.

### **Lighting**

- Use a night light in the bathroom, bedroom and hallways.
- Keep areas well lit and replace burned out bulbs immediately.
- Install bright lights in stairwells, hallways and passageways.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Use a life-line system and/or personal alarms.
- Limit or avoid alcohol.
- Be aware of any side effects from your medications.