



Your Guide to
**Home Safety
for Seniors**



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Home should be a place where you feel happy, comfortable and, most importantly, safe. As we age, though, homes can start to pose more safety risks, particularly for older adults who live alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than one out of four seniors fall each year—often at home—leading to serious injury and hospitalizations. Burns and poisonings are also more common in older adults due to the gradual loss of senses like taste and touch.

Here's the good news. Home safety risks may grow as we get older, but that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do to reduce it. There are many simple steps you can take now to improve the overall safety of the home and, in turn, help you or your loved one maintain their independence. Our comprehensive home safety guide for seniors can help you get started. Read on for helpful home safety tips and checklists for making home safe, secure and accessible for as long as possible.



Stay happy
and safe at home by
following these tips!



Fall Prevention

Falls can happen anytime, anywhere. For older adults, the risk is even higher because our sense of balance gets worse as we age. Whether it's a slip in the kitchen or a misstep going down the stairs, a fall in the home can cause devastating injuries for seniors like TBI (traumatic brain injury) and hip fractures. By making simple home improvements and changes, though, you can reduce home fall risk so you or your loved one can stay independent longer. Here's a comprehensive home accident prevention checklist to help you get started.



Bathroom

- Install non-skid surface in shower
- Place properly installed grab bars on side wall closest to toilet
- Raise the toilet seat if needed (to make it easier to sit down and stand up)

Interior Stairs

- Install handrails on both sides of stairs
- Keep stairs free of clutter

Bedroom

- Place most-used items within reach (phone, TV, remote)
- Clear path to bathroom
- Plug in a nightlight

Kitchen

- Keep a grabber nearby to reach high items

Exterior Stairs and Walkways

- Install good lighting
- Add handrails
- Keep walkways in good repair



Fire Safety

Whether it be leaving the stove top on or forgetting to snuff out a candle before bed, one mistake can spark disaster, particularly for seniors living alone. Decreased mobility and loss of senses like sight and smell heightens the risk for older adults. According to the National Fire Protection Association, at age 65, people are twice as likely to be killed or injured by fires compared to the population at large. That's why it's essential to have a plan about what to do in the event of a fire and take the necessary steps to reduce their fire risk. Here are four fire safety tips to follow that can help give you peace of mind.



- ❑ **Check smoke alarms:** Make sure a smoke alarm is installed in every room and tested monthly. If hearing or reacting quickly to an alarm is an issue, consider getting a smoke alarm that's connected to a monitoring center that can quickly dispatch help to your home.
- ❑ **Keep cooking area clear:** Cooking fires are the leading cause of burn injury for older adults. Make sure cooking surfaces are clean of excess grease and things that can burn easily aren't nearby. Use potholders and oven mitts and set timers when you leave the kitchen as a reminder when food is cooking.
- ❑ **Make escape plan:** Conduct your own fire drill to make sure you know what to do and where to go in case of an emergency. Learn all the exits of the home or apartment, and how to quickly get out of your building to safety. Consider getting a medical alert system if there is a mobility issue.
- ❑ **Inspect home heating:** Too much soot in a chimney or rusting wood stoves can easily start a fire. Ensure nothing combustible like curtains or clothing is near a fireplace and set the temperature of your water heater no higher than 120°F. All heating devices should be checked and serviced yearly by a professional.



Poisoning Protection

According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, 90% of the two million yearly reported poisonings occur in the home and the majority that prove fatal occur among older adults, particularly those with dementia. Medicine mishaps with dangerous and deadly side effects are the most common cause. With adults over 65 taking on average five different medicines along with over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements, taking measures to ensure medicine safety is crucial to preventing accidental poisonings.

Here are five simple steps you can take to reduce risk:

- ❑ **Talk to your doctor:** Inform your doctors of all medicines you're taking in case any shouldn't be taken together.
- ❑ **Read and follow the entire label:** Know the proper amount of each medicine you should take and how often to take it, along with foods to avoid while taking your medicine.
- ❑ **Store medicines in original containers:** Many pills look alike. Be sure to put them right back in their correct bottle to prevent a harmful mix up.
- ❑ **Know who to call:** Put the poison control number (1-800-222-1222) in your phone contacts so you can quickly get help in case of an emergency.

ADDITIONAL TIP:

Install a carbon monoxide alarm in every room of the home to prevent CO2 poisoning from heating sources like furnaces, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves.





Promoting Personal Wellness

Joining a book club or taking regular walks around the neighborhood may not seem at first like it would have any impact on your safety at home. Research shows, though, that staying engaged in activities that promote your overall quality of life gives your physical and mental health a big boost, particularly for older adults. Staying fitter, sharper and happier for longer means less risk of injury leading to falls, better reaction times to fire danger and fewer medication needs to keep track of. Here are five dimensions of wellness that indicate a well-rounded, purposeful and safe life while staying independent. Make sure you can check all of these boxes.



The Five Dimensions of Wellness

Social

- Maintain interest in getting together with friends and family
- Ensure access to reliable transportation for social outings

Emotional

- Dedicate time each day to things you enjoy
- Address any signs of depression or isolation

Physical

- Participate in regular exercise
- Keep abundant fresh, healthy foods in the kitchen
- Check that medicines are not expired and are properly stored
- Ensure access to transportation for medical appointments

Intellectual

- Attend local or online clubs, classes or workshops
- Balance a checkbook and pay bills on time

Spiritual

- Pursue daily activities that offer meaning and purpose
- Have transportation to religious services if it's important to you



Five Star Senior Living: Happy—and Safe

At Five Star, our residents and their families rest easy and live stress-free knowing their every need is taken care of in a safe, secure and supportive community. Our award-winning LifeStyle360 program focused on the Five Dimensions of Wellness also provides our residents with plentiful opportunities to stay happy, healthy and engaged.

Discover the safety, comfort and peace of mind senior living provides by visiting a community near you. We can't wait to show you the joy of stress-free living and introduce you to some of our residents and team members.

Find a Community

Explore our communities and find a community near you by visiting our website [fivestarseniorliving.com/communities](https://www.fivestarseniorliving.com/communities).

Call Us

Call us today at **(833) 457-8271**, and we'll schedule a personalized visit so you can experience Five Star Senior Living for yourself.



We have provided our **Home Safety Checklist** for your convenience. Now you can do a quick safety check the next time you visit. Feel free to print this out and save it!

Home safety

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Bathroom

- Non-skid surface in shower
- Water temperature reduced to 120° or less
- Properly installed grab bars, raised toilet seat if needed

Interior stairs

- Hand rails on both sides of stairs
- Stairs free of clutter

Bedroom

- Most used items within reach (phone, TV remote)
- Clear path to bathroom
- Night light

Kitchen

- Grabber to reach high items
- Expiration dates on food
- Appliances in good working condition

Exterior stairs and walkways

- Good lighting
- Hand rails
- Walkways in good repair

FIRE SAFETY

- Properly placed working smoke/carbon monoxide detectors
- HVAC should have summer and winter professional inspection
- Working fire extinguisher in kitchen and garage
- Door and window locks in good working order
- Phone next to bed and living room chair
- No overloaded outlets or extension cords
- Emergency numbers in clear view
- Chimneys in flues cleaned
- Check flammables in garage
- No space heaters

OVERALL

- Good lighting with adequate wattage and easy-to-reach switches in all rooms
- Furniture should not have rollers or casters
- Flooring in good repair and no throw rugs
- Clear pathways and eliminate clutter in all rooms

COMMUNICATION

- Telephone in working order with extensions throughout the house
- Mobile phone is a good idea
- Consider an emergency alert system
- List of medicines and emergency contacts (family, physician, POA, hospital, etc.)

Personal wellness

THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

Social Wellness

- Interest in getting together with friends and family
- Reliable transportation for social outings

Emotional Wellness

- Finds the purpose in each day
- No sign of depression or isolation

Physical Wellness

- Participation in regular exercise
- Abundant fresh, healthy foods in the kitchen
- Medicines in date and properly stored
- Transportation for medical appointments

Intellectual Wellness

- Attends local clubs, classes or workshops
- Ability to balance a checkbook and pay bills on time

Spiritual Wellness

- Transportation to worship services
- Daily activities that offer meaning and purpose



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Explore our communities and find a community near you by visiting our website fivestarseniorliving.com/communities.