

BASIC HOME SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

These Home Safety Instructions are provided to assist you in identifying safety hazards in your home. To prevent accidents, you should correct any hazards you identify:

Environmental Safety

1. Walkways

- Remove throw rugs whenever possible to avoid tripping.
- If you can't remove throw rugs, use rugs with non-skid backing to avoid slipping.
- Repair or replace torn carpeting to avoid tripping.
- Make the transition between types of flooring (such as wood floor to carpeted floor) as even as possible and secure to prevent tripping.
- Avoid waxing wood or linoleum floors to prevent slipping.

2. Stairs

- Rise between steps should ideally be no more than 5 inches.
- Make sure handrails are well anchored (or install handrails) on both sides of the stairway.
- Non-skid treads can be placed on wooden stairs to prevent slipping.
- Make sure carpeting on stairs is secure.

3. Furniture Layout

- Arrange furniture so that pathways are not cluttered.
- Chairs and tables need to be sturdy and stable enough to support a person leaning on them.
- Avoid furniture with sharp edges and corners - if furniture does have sharp edges or corners, pad them.
- Chairs with arm rests and high backs provide more support when sitting and more leverage when getting in and out of the chair.

4. Lighting

- Be sure that your lighting is ample to prevent falls and to assure that you can read medication labels and instructions easily.
- Light switches should be immediately accessible upon entering the room.
- Good lighting in hallways, stairs, and bathrooms is especially important.

5. Medicines

- Keep medicines out of the reach of children. If you keep your medicines out, be sure to put away when grandchildren or other small children visit.
- Dispose of expired medicines properly - flushing down the toilet is usually best.

6. Sliding Glass Doors

- Mark sliding glass doors with stickers to prevent someone from walking through the glass door.

Bathroom Safety

1. Bathtub

- Install skid-resistant strips or rubber mat.
- Use a bath seat if it is difficult to stand during a shower or too difficult to get up out of the tub.
- Install grab bars on the side of the tub or shower for balance.
- DO NOT use the soap dish or towel bars for balance - these can pull out of the wall very easily.
- Adjust water temperature to 120° or less, to prevent scalding.

2. Toilet

- Use an elevated toilet seat or commode if you need support getting on and off

- the toilet or you are not able to bend your hip normally after surgery.
- Install grab bars around the toilet if you need more leverage to get off the toilet.

3. Doors

- Avoid locking bathroom doors or use only locks that can be opened from both sides when you may need assistance in the bathroom.

Kitchen Safety

- Store frequently used items at waist level - use a Reacher or Grabber to avoid standing on a chair or footstool when items are not at eye level.
- Mark "ON" and "OFF" positions clearly on the dials on the stove.
- Use the front burners of the stove to avoid reaching over burners (unless there are small children in the home - in that case use back burners)
- Make sure pan/pot handles are not over other burners and not over the edge of the stove.
- Slide heavy pans across the stove instead of trying to lift them.
- Keep baking soda near the stove to extinguish small cooking fires and keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen if possible.
- Make sure the sleeves of your clothing are not loose or dangling while cooking, they could easily catch fire.
- Tables with 4 legs are more stable than pedestal-type tables.

Earthquake Preparedness

Refer to the front section of your phone book to complete earthquake information.

1. BEFORE

- Keep a 1-2 week supply of food/water on hand and consider any special dietary needs or formulas you may use.
- Store a 1-2 week supply of medications and /or medical supplies you will need (insulin, syringes, dressings).
- Know the procedure to follow if you are using medical equipment that runs on electricity and there is a power failure (ventilators, IV pumps, feeding pumps).
- Block or lock wheels of items such as hospital beds, commodes, and refrigerators.
- Persons who live alone should appoint an official "buddy" (neighbor, family member, friend) who will check on them after an earthquake.
- Anchor tall furniture to the wall and remove heavy items from the top shelves.

2. DURING

- If inside, stay inside and take cover under a heavy desk, table, or doorway away from windows or objects which may fall.
- Drag a bed bound patient (or transfer them to a wheelchair) to a safe area.
- Lock the wheels on a wheelchair after moving to a safe area.
- If outside, stand away from trees, electrical lines, and buildings.

3. AFTER

- Home infusion patients should go to the nearest emergency room if you run out of medications, solutions, or supplies and are unable to contact us. We will attempt to contact patients as soon as possible after an earthquake.
- If necessary, use an ambu bag for a ventilator-dependent patient until you can connect to a back-up system.
- Turn off gas at the meter if you smell gas or hear hissing near gas appliances.

DO NOT LIGHT ANY MATCHES IF A GAS LEAK IS SUSPECTED.

- Assess for injuries and be prepared to administer First Aid.
- Turn on a portable radio to listen for instructions from Public Safety Agencies.

Electrical Safety

- Keep Appliances Away from Water - Dropping water on an appliance or dropping an appliance into water (tub, sink, etc.) can cause electrocution.
- Use Only Appliances in Good Repair - Don't use lamps or appliances that appear to have a "short" when operated.
- Inspect Cords - Don't use appliances with cords that are frayed or have wires exposed.
- Grounded Plugs - Use grounded plugs or 3-prong adapters for medical equipment.
- Proper Use of Extension Cords - keep cords out of pathways to avoid excessive wear and prevent tripping.
- Proper Use of "Octopus" Plugs - Don't plug multiple appliances into one electrical outlet to prevent overheating the plug.

Fire Prevention and Response

- Smoke Detectors are recommended in each bedroom, each hallway, and in the kitchen.
- A Fire Extinguisher (ABC type) should be mounted or stored in a central and accessible area - make sure the extinguisher is functioning and that all caring for you know how to use it.
- **DO NOT** smoke in bed - it is a very hazardous fire danger.
- **DO NOT** smoke while watching TV if you are sleepy or prone to fall asleep.
- Have an evacuation plan
 - Someone who is bed bound will need to be placed in a wheelchair and removed or placed on a blanket and dragged away from danger.
 - Keep a hospital bed placed in the home (or the bedroom of someone who is ill) close to an exit.
 - Plan how to get someone who is ill out of an apartment that is not on the first floor - know where the stairs are.
- **Space Heaters** - keep away from furniture, cords, curtains, or other items that could ignite. Keep away from walkways where they can be bumped and cause burns.
- **Fireplaces** - Make sure you have a fireplace screen.
- **Oxygen** - Keep away from heat sources and open flames (including smoking) – oxygen is highly flammable. Post signs prohibiting smoking.
- **Fire Response** - Make sure you, and all caring for you, know how to use 911 for emergencies.