

CATEGORY:		TITLE:			WRITER:	DATE:	FILE NAME:	DATABASE:							
Living		Creating a Home That is Safe			Bettina Marks	<del>2009</del>	LV_2009.doc								
DISEASE STREAM					GENDER			AGE RANGE							
DIA	HBP	HC	HD	GH	M	F	B	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-65	65+	ALL
							X						X	X	

## CREATING A HOME THAT IS SAFE

INSIDE THE LIVINGROOM

INSIDE THE BATHROOM

INSIDE THE KITCHEN

MAKING THE STAIRS SAFE

THE FRONT ENTRANCE

Ref. 4, p. 1

Did you know that more than 4 million disabling accidents occur each year in the home? Some of these falls result in more serious injuries which impair and stress the lives of those who fall and their loved ones and caretakers. Many of these falls are fatal. Of the 4 million there were 27,000 avoidable deaths. Did you or someone you know suffer a

Ref. 4, p. 1

debilitating fall in their own home? Do either of your parents live alone in an old house? Perhaps you have a sister or brother who lives alone. A large amount of the accidents that occur could be prevented. Having a broken bone can be quite disabling and can cause further health complications. By paying careful attention to your body and to your environment, it is possible to avoid potential dangers.

Ref. 5 p. 2

Many falls occur in people who have osteoporosis because their bones are fragile and easily broken. Osteoporosis, the disease which weakens the bones, occurs in women as a result of the depletion of the female hormone, estrogen, which occurs during menopause. Women are four times as likely to develop osteoporosis than men.

Ref. 5 p. 2 & 5

Ref. 5 p. 2 & 5

Men may also develop osteoporosis if they have low levels of testosterone or if they use certain medications such as steroids and certain antacids over a long period of time.

Ref. 5 p. 9

Both men and women should try to slow down process of losing bone mass

Ref. 5 p. 8

and increase bone density through diet and exercise. A lifestyle that includes smoking, heavy drinking, not eating enough-calcium-rich foods and lack of physical exercise will contribute to the loss of bone mass as you age.

Ref. 2 p. 2

Ref. 3 p. 1

Ref. 1 p. 1

If you do suffer from osteoporosis you will want to take the necessary precautions to prevent falls and possible serious injuries because you are at a greater risk. Other illnesses could also contribute to a weakened condition that could make you more susceptible to falling. If you suffer from diabetes, you may have problems with your feet, or eyes, which may impair your ability to walk and easily get around. Those of you who may have suffered a recent heart attack or stroke may not be as mobile as you once were and may need to take extra care to avoid potential accidents.

Ref. 6 p. 1

You can, however, insure your safety throughout your home by carefully assessing potential hazards and by making the necessary repairs. Studies have shown that older people tend to live in older homes which often need repair and modification. Over 60% of older persons live in homes more than 20 years old. Research shows that one-third to one-half of home accidents can be prevented by modification and repair.

#### INSIDE THE LIVINGROOM

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Always make sure that you can turn on a light as you enter your home to light your way.

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Don't overload electric outlets; make sure electric cords do not obstruct pathways through the house

Ref. 4 p. 4

- When electric cords lie under rugs or furniture for a long time, check them periodically for frayed or worn spots.

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Use non-skid backing under scatter rugs covering highly polished floors.

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Move electric cords out of paths through a room

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Remove or repair frayed rugs

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Fasten area rugs to the floor with specially made tape or tacks

- Avoid "zigzag" patterns on rugs.

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Fix wobbly furniture or get rid of it altogether

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Choose chairs that have sturdy armrests. They'll help you sit and stand without losing your balance and help prevent you from falling.
- Make sure that your sofa and chairs are the right height: when you sit, your feet should touch the floor while your knees are slightly bent

## INSIDE THE BATHROOM

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Install safety rails in the bathtub

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Put a non-skid bath mat or non-skid strips in the tub

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Use shower chairs and bath benches

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Never touch or turn on an electric switch or an electrical appliance while standing in the bathtub, shower, or on a damp floor

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Put a nonskid bath mat next to the tub

- Wipe up water spills immediately

Ref. 4 p. 3

- If necessary, install and use grab rails to help you sit up or down. Don't use the towel rack as a grab rail. It may be unstable.

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Keep soap in soap dish; never leave it on the rim of the tub

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Install a night-light

## INSIDE THE KITCHEN

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Stand on a sturdy stepladder to get to out-of-reach items; never use a chair, as it may not be stable

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Move objects out of the hard-to-reach places entirely

- Get rid of small area rugs

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Put a non-skid rubber mat near the sink and stove

- Use a non-skid floor wax when cleaning

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Clean up spills immediately

- Be sure you can turn on a light before you enter the room to light your way

Ref. 4 p. 3

- Unplug all appliances, especially irons and high-speed food processors, immediately after use

## MAKING THE STAIRS SAFE

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Put up a sturdy handrail on each side of every stairway
- Have the handrail go a bit beyond each end of the stairs (parallel to the floor) for extra support and to show you where the stairs start and end
- Make sure the stairway is well lit with light that is neither too bright nor too dim

Ref. 4 p. 4

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Have a light switch at both the top and bottom of the staircase
- If you have eye trouble, put brightly colored tape on the first and last stair for extra contrast (Most falls happen on the first or last three steps).
- Choose a carpet design that doesn't disguise the end of the staircase
- Avoid zigzag patterns on carpeting

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Firmly secure stairway carpeting and regularly inspect it for holes and worn spots
- If the floor is bare, apply non-skid tape or rubber stair treads

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Keep books, laundry, and all other objects off the stairs
- Never wax stairs and landings

## THE FRONT ENTRANCE

Ref. 4 p. 4

- Put handrails on all outdoor steps
- Cover icy walkways with rock salt or sand immediately after rain or snow

### TIP

An effective procedure to insure safety throughout your home is to make a routine room by room check for potential dangers.

## SUMMARY

Ref. 6 p. 1

The risk of incurring a serious injury from a fall or accident in your

home is greater as you age. It is very important to identify potential hazards and to correct them immediately to insure that your home is as safe and comfortable as possible.

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