

## Including: fire, infection control, severe weather, fall prevention, personal safety

### Fire Safety:

- Have smoke detectors on every level of your home and check them monthly. A carbon monoxide detector should be installed.
- If you are hearing impaired, use smoke detectors that have flashing lights as well.
- Have a working fire extinguisher and have it inspected yearly.
- Throw out or repair items with frayed or damaged electrical cords and do not overload circuits.
- In case of fire, plan two ways out of your home and pick a place to meet others outside. If you can't escape as planned, be calm, close the door and seal any cracks to hold back smoke. Call 911 and signal for help out of a window.

### Infection control:

- Wash hands as soon as possible when you get home from an outside location, before cooking, eating, after using the bathroom, sneezing and/or coughing.
- Get your yearly vaccinations per your physicians' recommendations.

### Medications:

- Review medications with your PCP and discuss possible side effects, allergies and drug interactions.

- Take all medications only as prescribed and call your health care professional if you notice new symptoms or side effects.
- Keep a list of your medications in your wallet and posted on your refrigerator.
- Organize your medications clearly so you take the correct number at the appropriate time.
- Never take expired medications and do not dispose of them in garbage or flush them. Unused medication can be collected and many hospitals now have a place to dispose of them. Often your local police dept collects them to be disposed of properly.

### Severe Weather:

- Get to a basement immediately. If unable to, or do not have a basement, move to an interior wall or room that has no windows to protect yourself from glass or flying debris. You should cover yourself with a thick blanket.
- Have a flashlight on hand and keep a battery-operated radio in case of a power outage to stay updated on local weather/news.
- Know how to turn off water, gas and electricity in the case of leaks and /or damaged utilities.
- If you need help or are unable to get to a safe location, call a neighbor or 911 for assistance.

## Protect yourself from falls

Complications from falls are the leading cause of death among older adults. You can reduce this risk by making simple changes to your home.

### Here are some important ideas:

#### Floors and stairs:

- Wear properly fitting shoes that have non-slip bottoms
- Keep floors and pathways free from clutter
- Remove loose rugs or secure them with double-sided tape or that have a nonskid rubber back.
- Place contrasting colored tape on stair edges and make sure handrails are in place and firmly secured.

#### Lighting:

- Keep your home brightly lit to avoid tripping on hard to see objects
- Use nightlights in bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.

#### Bathroom safety:

- Install grab bars by the toilet and bathtub. Avoid using grab bars with suction cups

- Use a bath bench and non-slip mat in the bathtub
- Use a raised toilet seat or install a high-rise toilet

### **Assistive Devices:**

- If you have a cane or walker, ensure you are using it properly and that it is easily accessible and in very good shape.
- Store frequently used items within reach and use a grabber for items on the floor on the ground or above your head.
- Have your hearing/vision checked frequently and ensure that hearing aides are working properly and in good condition.

### **Other Safety Tips:**

- Limit or avoid the use of alcohol.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down. This will help decrease dizziness and allow you to acclimate yourself.
- Exercise regularly to promote strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. Discuss with your PCP before starting an exercise regimen.
- Have a portable phone by you at all times and emergency phone numbers available. If you need, consider wearing an alarm device in case you fall and can't get up.
- ThedaCare at Home can install grab bars and educate you on other safety supplies.
- Avoid climbing on stepladders or chairs.
- Do not use swivel or rocking chairs.

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## What to do if you fall

- **STAY CALM**
- Take time to assess the situation
- If you are hurt or unable to get up, call for help, keep warm and move the best you can while you wait
- If you are not hurt, try to get up
- Roll onto your side
- Push yourself up to a side sitting position
- Slowly get onto your hands and knees
- Try to crawl toward a sturdy piece of furniture that can support you to get up like a sturdy chair or couch
- Sit for a few minutes and assess yourself
- Call doctor or 911