

# Elder Home Safety Checklist

Use this handy checklist to determine the safety of your home.

## KITCHEN

1. Is there good lighting over the stove, counters and sink?	Yes ___ No ___
2. Do you keep drawers and cupboards closed to avoid bumping into them?	Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you store toxic products, such as household cleaners and laundry detergent, safely by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. storing them separately from food?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Cleaning supplies can be mistaken for other products when colors or shapes are similar, e.g., bottles of liquid cleaners and bottles of apple juice.</i>	
b. keeping them in their original containers with their original labels?	Yes ___ No ___
4. Are kitchen items, such as food and housewares, stored safely by keeping often-used items in an easy-to-reach spot?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Reaching for items above the stove while cooking can result in a burn or fall.</i>	
5. Are appliances used safely by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. unplugging them when not in use?	Yes ___ No ___
b. keeping them away from the sink or stove?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Cords can be damaged by excess heat. Electrical appliances and power cords can cause shock or electrocution if they get wet.</i>	
c. replacing or repairing frayed cords or exposed wires?	Yes ___ No ___
6. Do you use a sturdy step stool to reach items in upper cabinets?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Unsteady step stools and chairs can cause falls. Good step stools have a wide leg base, rubber tips and handrails.</i>	
7. Do you follow safe cooking guidelines by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. turning pot handles away from the edges of the stove and from other burners?	Yes ___ No ___
b. keeping pot holders in easy reach (but not hanging over the stove)?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Using a wet dish towel instead of a pot holder could cause a burn because heat travels quickly through the damp cloth.</i>	
c. avoiding clothes with loose flowing sleeves when cooking?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Long, loose sleeves can easily catch on fire and can overturn pots by catching on pot handles. Loose sleeves can be rolled back or fastened with pins or elastic.</i>	

8. Do you know how to respond to a kitchen fire by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. covering the pan with a lid when there is a stovetop fire?	Yes ___ No ___
b. closing the door and turning off the oven when there is an oven fire?	Yes ___ No ___
9. Do you reduce your risk of slipping by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. wiping up grease, water, and other spilled liquids or foods immediately?	Yes ___ No ___
b. using non-slip wax (or no wax) or well-secured carpeting on the floor?	Yes ___ No ___
c. letting a washed or waxed floor dry before walking on it?	Yes ___ No ___

## BATHROOM

10. Do you bathe safely by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. keeping towels, shampoo, and soap within easy reach?	Yes ___ No ___
b. avoiding the use of bath oil and creams in the shower or tub?	Yes ___ No ___
c. placing non-skid mats or appliqués in bathtubs and showers?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Wet and soapy surfaces are especially slippery and may cause falls.</i>	
d. having well-secured grab bars (not a towel rack) installed in the shower or tub?	Yes ___ No ___
11. Is your home's hot water adjusted to a safe temperature (110-120 F)?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Use a meat or candy thermometer to test water temperature, letting the water run for 3 minutes before testing. Always check water temperature by hand before entering the bathtub or shower.</i>	
12. Do you use appliances safely by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. keeping hairdryers, radios, and electric shavers away from water?	Yes ___ No ___
b. unplugging appliances after use?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>A plugged-in electrical appliance (even if not turned on) may cause a deadly shock if it falls into water.</i>	
c. keeping space heaters out of the bathroom?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>If a space heater must be used to heat the bathroom, use only while the tub is filling and be sure to unplug and remove it when the bath is ready.</i>	
13. Are you able to get off and on the toilet easily?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>If needed, install a grab bar by the toilet or use a raised toilet seat.</i>	

## BEDROOM

14. Is there a clear and well-lighted pathway from the bedroom to the bathroom?	Yes ___ No ___
15. Do you have a light or flashlight within easy reach of the bed?	Yes ___ No ___
16. Is there a telephone within easy reach of the bed?	Yes ___ No ___
17. Do you use an electric blanket safely by following these guidelines:	Yes ___ No ___
a. never tucking the coils under the mattress?	Yes ___ No ___
b. never keeping anything on top of the electric blanket?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Electric blankets may overheat and cause burns when covered by other bedding or when pets sleep on top.</i>	
c. never folding the blanket when it is plugged in?	Yes ___ No ___

## GENERAL

18. Are there scatter rugs and runners tacked or taped down or slip-resistant?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Avoid using scatter rugs if possible. If used, secure with double-faced carpet tape to avoid slipping.</i>	
19. Are carpets in good condition with no worn or frayed areas?	Yes ___ No ___
20. Is a light within easy reach when entering each room?	Yes ___ No ___
21. Are paths through rooms well-lighted and free of obstructions?	Yes ___ No ___
22. Are electrical and extension cords in good condition and used properly by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. replacing any cords that are frayed and worn?	Yes ___ No ___
b. placing cords out of the flow of traffic and not under rugs?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Stepping on cords can damage them and can become a fire hazard.</i>	
c. being careful not to overload outlets or extension cords?	Yes ___ No ___
23. Are smoke detectors properly placed and maintained by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. installing a smoke detector on each floor, including one near the sleeping area?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Place detectors on the ceiling or on the wall 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling.</i>	
b. checking smoke detectors monthly?	Yes ___ No ___

c. replacing batteries if needed, at least once a year?	Yes ___ No ___
24. Are you using your space heater cautiously by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. keeping it 36 inches away from furniture, curtains and other flammable objects?	Yes ___ No ___
b. plugging it into a wall outlet and not an extension cord?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Use an adaptor to connect the heater's 3-prong plug if you do not have a 3-hole outlet.</i>	
c. being careful not to sit too near the heater?	Yes ___ No ___
25. If you smoke, do you smoke safely by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. using deep, wide ashtrays with grooves for cigarettes?	Yes ___ No ___
b. never smoking in bed or when drowsy?	Yes ___ No ___
c. never leaving lit cigarettes in the ashtray?	Yes ___ No ___
d. always checking ashtrays and furniture (e.g., under couch cushions) before leaving the house or going to bed?	Yes ___ No ___
26. Are stairways made safer by:	Yes ___ No ___
a. being free of clutter?	Yes ___ No ___
b. having good lighting?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Stairs should be lighted so that each step, particularly the edges, can be clearly seen while going up and down.</i>	
c. having two sturdy, easy-to-grip handrails fastened securely and running continuously from the top to the bottom of the stairs?	Yes ___ No ___
d. keeping throw rugs away from stairs and landings?	Yes ___ No ___
e. having the outline of each step easy to see?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Avoid dark, deep pile or busy-pattered carpets on stairs.</i>	
f. being in good repair with even surfaces (no rubber mats or metal strips that can cause tripping?)	Yes ___ No ___

## SAFETY HABITS

27. Do you wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes with good traction?	Yes ___ No ___
<i>Do not walk around in bare or stocking feet and avoid wearing slippers that tend to fall off easily.</i>	
28. Are the hems of your clothes short enough to prevent tripping?	Yes ___ No ___

29. Do you get up slowly from a sitting or lying position to avoid becoming dizzy? <i>Many falls occur when people get up too quickly. When rising from a sitting position, sit up a moment before getting out of bed. Stand for a moment before walking.</i>	Yes ___ No ___
30. Do you carry small loads, especially when using stairs, and make extra trips if necessary?	Yes ___ No ___
31. Do you wear a seat belt when driving or riding in a car?	Yes ___ No ___
32. Do you know how to reduce the impact of a fall by relaxing, letting your muscles go limp, and rolling as you fall?	Yes ___ No ___
33. Are there emergency numbers at every telephone? <i>Include the phone number of a nearby relative or neighbor. Remember to include your own phone number, address, and directions to your house. Have at least one phone located on a low surface where you can reach it if you have an injury which leaves you unable to stand.</i>	Yes ___ No ___
34. Do you have a plan for getting help easily in an emergency? <i>Consider developing a system where you check with a neighbor or friend on a regular basis. If appropriate, look into an emergency response system.</i>	Yes ___ No ___
35. If children visit, do you reduce the risk of poisoning by: a. keeping medications and other dangerous products out of children's reach? <i>Many away-from-home childhood poisonings occur at a grandparent's home.</i> b. having a bottle of Ipecac on hand in case of a poisoning? <i>Call the Poison Control Center at <a href="tel:1-800-962-1253">1-800-962-1253</a> or a physician before giving Ipecac to a child.</i>	Yes ___ No ___ Yes ___ No ___ Yes ___ No ___
36. Have you planned and practiced an escape route to be used in the event of a fire? <i>Have an emergency exit plan and an alternate plan. Remember to practice the escape plan at night when most fatal fires occur.</i>	Yes ___ No ___
37. Have you learned the "stop, drop, and roll" fire safety technique? <i>If your clothes catch on fire, stop where you are, lower yourself to the floor, and roll to smother the flames.</i>	Yes ___ No ___

**Congratulations for taking these first steps  
in making your home a safer place!**

