



Remembering When™

A FIRE AND FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS



How to Prevent Fires



1 **If you smoke, smoke outside.** Provide smokers with large, deep, sturdy ashtrays. Wet cigarette butts and ashes before throwing them out or bury them in sand. Never smoke in bed. Never smoke if oxygen is used in the home.

2 **Give space heaters space.** Keep them at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from anything that can burn—including you. Shut off heaters when you leave or go to bed.

3 **Stay in the kitchen when frying food.** Never leave cooking unattended. Wear tight-fitting or short sleeves when cooking. Use oven mitts to handle hot pans. If a pan of food catches fire, slide a lid over it and turn off the burner. Don't cook if you are drowsy from alcohol or medication.

4 **Stop, drop, and roll.** If your clothes catch on fire stop (don't run), drop gently to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire. Use cool water for 3-5 minutes to cool the burn. Get medical help right away.

5 **Smoke alarms save lives.** Have smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, inside each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area. For the best protection, use interconnected alarms so when one sounds, they all sound. Make sure everyone in your home can hear the smoke alarms. Test the alarms monthly.

6 **Plan and practice your escape from fire and smoke.** If possible, plan two ways out of every room in your home and two ways out of your home. Make sure windows and doors open easily. If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside.

7 **Know your local emergency number.** Your emergency number may be 9-1-1 or the fire department's phone number. Once you have escaped a fire, call the fire department from a neighbor's phone or a cell phone.

8 **Plan your escape around your abilities.** Have a telephone near your bed in case you are trapped by smoke or fire. Have other necessary items near your bed, such as medications, glasses, wheel chair, walker, scooter, or cane.

How to Prevent Falls



1 **Exercise regularly** to build strength and improve your balance and coordination. Ask your doctor about the best physical exercise for you.

2 **Take your time.** Get out of chairs slowly. Sit a moment before you get out of your bed. Stand and get your balance before you walk. Be aware of your surroundings.

3 **Keep stairs and walking areas free** of electrical cords, shoes, clothing, books, magazines, and other items.

4 **Improve the lighting** in and outside your home. Use nightlights or a flashlight to light the path between your bedroom and the bathroom. Turn on the lights before using the stairs. See an eye specialist once a year—better vision can help prevent falls.

5 **Use non-slip mats** in the bathtub and on shower floors. Have grab bars installed on the wall next to the bathtub, shower, and toilet. Wipe up spilled liquids immediately.

6 **Be aware of uneven surfaces** indoors and outdoors. Use only throw rugs that have rubber, non-skid backing. Consider non-skid rug pads under rugs. Always smooth out wrinkles and folds in carpeting. Be aware of uneven sidewalks and pavement outdoors. Ask a family member or friend to clear ice and snow from outside stairs and walkways and always use hand rails if available. Step carefully.

7 **Stairways should be well lit** from both the top and the bottom. Have easy-to-grip handrails installed along the full length of both sides of the stairs.

8 **Wear sturdy, well-fitting, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles.** They are safer than high heels, thick-soled athletic shoes, slippers, or stocking feet.