



Preventing Falls - We Want You to Stay Upright and Safe!

Did you know?

One in four Americans aged 65+ experiences a fall each year

The five most common causes of balance and mobility problems are:

- Muscle weakness
- Vision impairment
- Decreased sensation in legs or feet
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Arthritis or other painful condition of legs or feet

You can do a lot to prevent falls by correcting issues that you can identify in this checklist.

You should consider these safety improvements in order to make your home a “Fall-Free Zone”. Inspect your home, both inside and outside, and check off the items that are complete as well as the items that you still need to correct. And ask for help with completing those things that are difficult for you to complete on your own.

Check the following in All Rooms and All Areas of Your Home:

Needs to be Done	Item	Notes	Completed!
	All Exits and Hallways are clear and easily accessible	36" clear space in every hallway and every exit	
	All carpet should have short, dense pile		
	All rugs are secured with double-sided carpet tape or other non-slip material		
	All floors should have non-skid, no-wax flooring material		
	All thresholds even with floor (no bumps)		
	Furniture is arranged so that you can easily get around it		
	Electrical cords are out of the way		
	Chairs and couches are stable (not wobbly) and have armrests to help you stand up or sit down		
	Lighting is present in every room and every hallway, and is bright and evenly distributed		
	Use lampshades that reduce glare		
	All light switches and electrical outlets are within easy reach		
	Have working nightlights in place that can help you safely walk at night		
	Do not leave anything on the floor that might cause you to trip		

Check Your Stairs:

Needs to be Done	Item	Notes	Completed!
	Install handrails on both sides of stairways at the best height for you		
	Steps are even and in good shape		
	Check that carpet adheres firmly along stairs; repair or replace worn carpet		
	Remove rugs at the top or bottom of stairways		
	Use good lighting in stairways; install on-off switches at the top and bottom of stairs	Use at least 60-watt bulbs in stairways and hallways	
	Stairs are clear of all objects		
	Be especially careful with a single step situation including curbs; many people fall when there is only one step		

Check Your Kitchen:

	Keep items that you need at eye level or below. Avoid having to use a step stool		
	If you must use a step stool, use a sturdy step stool, preferably with handrails		
	Throw away broken stepstools		
	Clean spills immediately to avoid slipping		
	Do not use floor wax		
	Never stand on countertops		

Check Your Bathroom(s):

Needs to be Done	Item	Notes	Completed!
	Use rubber bathmats or strips in bathtubs and showers		
	Install at least two grab bars in every shower/bath		
	Clean up water from the floor		
	Secure bathroom rugs to the floor		
	Use raised toilet seats and install handrails within reach		
	Always use a night-light		

Check Outside of Your Home:

Needs to be Done	Item	Notes	Completed!
	Use bright lighting along all paths and stoops		
	Install handrails along any flight of outdoor steps		
	Clean up standing water from walkways – it can get slippery or freeze		
	Spread sand or salt on icy walkways before walking on them	Prepare before it gets cold!	
	Keep steps, sidewalks, decks, and porches clear of newspapers, sticks, rocks, wet leaves, and other debris		
	Repair broken or uneven pavement on walkways and driveways		
	Remove roots that protrude from the ground		
	Clean spills immediately, especially oily ones on concrete or asphalt		
	Take your time and pay attention when you are on the stairs		
	Be especially careful when you can't reach the handrails		
	Be especially careful when you carry large loads		

Let's Not Meet By Accident - Practice Fall Prevention Every Day!

For more information, go to www.mcfrs.org/mcsafe and look up the information listed for “Seniors and/or Disabled”

This Checklist has been produced as a partnership between the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service and the Montgomery County African American Health Program, August 2019.