



Our Aging
Everyday, a new horizon

Home Environment Checklist

I. Accessibility:

- Uneven or cracked walkway/driveway leading up to the home
- One or more steps at the entrance
- Easy and safe access to the mailbox
- Is the home on one level or are there steps to other levels
 - Are there secure handrails at all stairs
 - Are steps clean and unobstructed
 - Are stairwells lit properly
- Do the doors have levers instead of round knobs
- Is there good lighting
 - at the entry – inside and outside
 - throughout the home
 - are hallways well lit
 - are there extra light bulbs in the home
- Are external doors strong without being too heavy to open
- Doormats should be non-skid (inside and outside)
- Are doorways wide enough to accommodate a walker or wheelchair, if one becomes necessary
- Are there clear and unobstructed pathways throughout the house
- Are there scatter rugs
- Are there loose wires or other obstacles in walkway areas
- Check for unsafe or frayed wiring
- Are there grab bars in the shower/tub/toilet area
- Is there a seat in the shower
- Raised toilet seat
- Are there non-skid surfaces in bathrooms, bath tubs and showers
- Are bathroom counters high enough to provide stability
- Is the bathroom well lit
- Are there steps to other entrances/exits, such as garages & patios
- Are clothes accessible without requiring too much bending or reaching
- Are there lights in clothes closets
- Is seating high enough to make it easy to get up
- Are there chairs with stable arms for help in getting up safely
- Does the person need a lift chair
- Does the home need a chair lift for stairs
- Telephone within easy reach and with emergency numbers available with speed dial
- Accessible faucets in kitchen and bathroom(s)

II. Safety:

- Are there functioning smoke detectors
- Are there functioning carbon dioxide detectors
- Is there a functioning fire extinguisher
- At what temperature is the Hot water heater temperature set ____
 - (Department of Energy and several Departments of Health agree that 120°F is the appropriate temperature to avoid scalding and avoid Legionnaires' disease bacteria (LDB) and other microorganisms.)
- Is the stove able to be turned off
- Is there emergency lighting for blackouts, including batteries
- Battery powered radio/TV with batteries
- Working clocks and radios
- Non-slip steps
- Is there an emergency plan for weather events that could lead to isolation, loss of power, water & food preparation capability
- Does the person know how to turn off water in case of flooding
- If the person starts to wander there may need for locks high enough up that they are not visible and cannot be opened
- Pools may need safety gates
- Cleaning materials may need to be stored out of sight
- Pets and pet needs maintained cleanly and without infestation
- Furniture with glass and/or sharp edges may need protective edges
- Is there appropriate heating and /or cooling systems, in working order

III. Medication Management:

- Is there a list of all current medications with proper dosage and instructions for taking
- Does someone knowledgeable review the current medications to assure that they are being taken properly
- Is there a box or other organized system for assuring that medications are taken as prescribed
- Is there a system to assure timely renewal of medications
- Make certain that doctors are aware of all nonprescription medication that are in the home and the person may be using (Over the counter [OTCs] medications can cause negative interactions with prescription medications)
- Monitoring of pain and addictive medications for proper use
- Mail order prescription services are often less costly than retail or monthly suppliers
 - Some people may be eligible for help with medications through their Part D Medicare provider, pharmaceutical company or Medicaid
- Is there a list of old medications that may be discontinued (this may be helpful for new physicians seeing the person for the first time)
- Unused or expired medications need to be disposed in a timely, safe manner
- If injections are required a sharps box may be needed for proper disposal of needles
- For medications that have food restrictions, there should be a warning posted on the refrigerator
- Check for misuse of alcohol and/or recreational drugs

IV. Medical Equipment:

- Canes & walkers –
 - may need to be set by rehab professional for correct height
 - patient should be trained in proper use
- Ramps may be required for safe access and egress
- Wheelchairs and power chairs/scooters must be fit for the person and environment
- Heating pads should always be set on low or medium settings and used for a limited time
- Reachers can help for people with limited range of motion
- Specialized eating utensils help for people with gripping problems
- Partial bed rails for persons who may fall or need help to transfer out of bed
- Hospital beds and specialized mattresses may be needed for people who spend more hours in bed than just sleeping at night
- Bed with ability to raise head and/or feet
- Bedside commode
- Shoes with non-skid bottoms and Velcro closing
- Personal Emergency Response System
- Daily vital sign measures (disease specific) and call to a nurse call center
- Eyeglasses in convenient locations
- Dentures, biteplates
- Hearing aids with battery & ear piece replacements
- Prosthetics should be reviewed periodically for appropriateness, especially if the person has gained or lost weight
- Incontinence supplies with adequate disposal
- Moisture guards for mattresses
- Lighting at the bedside in easy reach

V. Kitchen:

- Check for cleanliness of floors, tables, dishes, glasses, utensils, refrigerator, garbage area
- Sufficient supply of staples (i.e. basic foods, healthy drinks, non-refrigerator dry goods)
- Appropriate, healthy food in the refrigerator
- Check for items that are expired
- Does stove and cooktop work properly
- Is stove and cooktop clean – especially of things that could cause fires
- Are the most used items within easy reach – high and low
- Make certain that access to pots and pans does not require excessive bending
- Is the kitchen well vented
- Is lighting sufficient
- Is seating safe (no casters) and comfortable
- Are laundry facilities accessible