

Think Safe Be Safe: Safe Steps to Reduce Falls

Millions of Americans are only a step away from becoming victims of the leading cause of unintentional home injuries - falls.

According to The State of Home Safety in America™ (2004) conducted by the Home Safety Council, falls are by far the leading cause of unintentional home injury death. Falls account for an average of 5.1 million injuries and nearly 6,000 deaths each year. The vast majority of fall deaths occur among people age 65 and older and fall death rates are higher for males.

In an effort to reduce injuries among people of all ages, the Home Safety Council encourages families to identify and correct potential falling hazards in and around the home.

Home Safety "Walk-Through"

- Walk through your home to identify and remedy potential falling hazards. What to look for:



- All stairs and steps should be protected with a secure banister or hand-rail.



- Make sure all porches, hallways and stairwells are well lit. Use the maximum safe wattage in light fixtures. (Maximum wattage is typically posted inside light fixtures.)



- Use nightlights to help light hallways and bathrooms during night-time hours.



- Keep stairs, steps, landings and all floors clear. Reduce clutter and safely tuck away telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.



- In homes with children, make sure toys and games are not left on steps or landings. When very young children are present use safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs.



- Use a non-slip mat or install adhesive safety strips or decals in bathtubs and showers. If you use a bath mat on the floor, choose one that has a non-skid bottom.



- Install grab bars in bath and shower stalls. Don't use towel racks or wall-mounted soap dishes as grab bars; they can easily come loose, causing a fall.

- Install window guards to prevent young children from falling out of upper windows. (Select guards with emergency-release devices.)



- Keep the floor clean. Promptly clean up grease, water and other spills.



- If you use throw rugs in your home place them over a rug-liner or choose rugs with non-skid backs to reduce your chance of falling.



- Use a sturdy step stool with hand rails when climbing is necessary.



- Follow medication dosages closely. Using multiple medications and/or using medications incorrectly may cause dizziness, weakness and other side effects which can lead to a dangerous fall.