

Home Fall Prevention

Check for Safety

Last year in Pinellas County there were over 14,000 9-1-1 calls for a fall. These falls are often due to hazards that are easy to fix.

This checklist will help you find and fix these hazards in your home.

Other things you can do to prevent falls

- Exercise regularly, which makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all of the medicines you take, including the over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Some medications can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Be aware that Alcohol effects your balance.
- Have your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision can increase your risk of falling.
- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.
- Wear shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers.
- Improve lighting in your home with brighter light bulbs. Florescent bulbs are bright and cost less to use.
- Keep a working flashlight in locations where it is most often needed.
- Put a phone near the floor in case you fall and can't get up.
- Think about wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and can't get up.
- Ask your doctor about occupational therapy.

If you have identified any areas where you need assistance, you can contact the Senior Help Line at

1-800-96ELDER or 1-800-96-ELDER
From outside area call 727-217-8111

For non-emergency ambulance transport needs, call Sunstar at 727-530-1234

In case of emergency, dial 9-1-1

For more information on fall prevention, visit www.pinellasfallprevention.com or www.agingcarefl.org



In case of an emergency call 9-1-1

Floors: Look at the floor in each room.

- Do you have to walk around furniture? Ask someone to move the furniture so your path is clear.
- Remove throw rugs or use double sided tape or a non-slip backing so the rugs won't slip.
- Pick up things that are on the floor like magazines, shoes, or towels.
- Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords? Coil or tape cords and wires and place them next to the wall. Include telephone, oxygen tubing, and extension cords.

Stairs and Steps: Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside your home

- Pick up things on the stairs like books, shoes, or other objects.
- Have someone fix broken or loose steps.
- Is there a light with a working bulb over the stairway? If not, have an electrician install lights at the top and bottom of the stairs. Also, have them install glowing light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Make sure that the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach a non-slip rubber tread to the stairs.
- Are the handrails loose or broken? Have someone fix the handrails or put in new ones. Make sure that there are handrails on both sides of the steps that are as long as the stairs.
- Paint a brightly colored strip on the top and bottom steps.

Kitchen

- Move items in your cabinets so that the things you use often are easily within reach.
- If you must use a step stool, get one with a bar to hold onto. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Bathrooms

- Put a non-slip rubber mat or self stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- Install a liquid soap, shampoo, and conditioner dispenser about shoulder height and remove bars of soap and bottles of shampoo.
- Have a carpenter put grab bars inside the tub and next to the toilet.

Bedroom

- Place a lamp close to the bed where it's easy to reach (many falls are due to poor lighting).
- Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark? Put a night-light or two so you can see where you are walking. Some night-lights go on by themselves after dark.



“We didn't think we were at risk to fall in our home, but our children felt better knowing we went through the check list and made our home safer.”