

Elder Tips:
What Happens if I Fall?
...provided as a courtesy by Maryhill Manor

Living alone as a Elder can be stressful for families and the Elder themselves. With some prevention you can be aware of the ways to remain safe, and alert others to times you need help for an emergency. Remaining safe in your home can be done with a few small steps. Making sure others know you are alright can also be easily accomplished. Falls are one of the most common concerns of Elders at home alone and their loved ones. Falls can lead to serious injury or death and we suggest you look at your home critically to make sure you have taken safety measures to prevent injury.

Preventing falls at home takes planning, just as we do for all of the other possible episodes in our lives. A good Safety Plan to remove obstacles in your home and alert others that you need help are part of planning for safety.

Make sure you check your home for possible hazards such as scatter rugs, cluttered walkways in your home or outdoors and remove them before something bad happens. Add grab bars in and around your tub/shower or toilet, and ensure that railings around steps are secure.

Develop a daily calling circle and set a time to talk each day. A calling circle to check on an elder every day is a way to chat and keep in touch as well as make sure they are alright. Your calling circle could include friends, family, church members, or others and those calling should know that if they cannot reach the person being called for a day or two it may mean that something is wrong that needs to be checked on.

Other persons **set up a special alert system with neighbors or family** using cues such as opening the blinds by a certain time and watching for lights in the house each evening. If the blinds are closed or the light is not on, their loved ones or friends stop and visit. That way, someone is checking on the elder alone every day, and it gives another chance to spend time with a loved one while allowing you piece of mind.

Lifeline is another excellent option for the Elder living at home alone. This allows the elder to contact assist persons in the case of a fall by pushing a button. Talk to your physician to see how to access this option.

Preventing the fall is the best way to remain safe and the Safety Plan is one way to make sure the Elder at home keeps in touch with those around them while remaining independent and happy at home.

If a fall occurs:

REMAIN CALM!

Stay where you are for a minute and take a few deep breaths to quiet yourself. Then check yourself to see if you are hurt. If you have "Lifeline" Use it.

If you ARE hurt:

1. If you have a phone right there, call for help. **If you have Lifeline use it, and stay where you are until help arrives.** Crawl, roll, or drag yourself to the phone if not near you, ONLY if you are able.
2. If you cannot move, look for things to cover yourself with that are within your reach such as blankets from your bed, afghans, newspapers, pillows or cushions. Keep as warm as possible until someone comes.
3. If you hear someone coming such as the mail man, paperboy, or a relative, call out or bang on something to make as much noise as possible.

If you are NOT hurt:

1. Sit for a minute and MAKE SURE you are alright. Try to relax.
2. Roll, scoot, or crawl to a piece of furniture that will not move, such as a sofa, solid chair, or your bed.
3. Pull yourself onto that object if able.
4. Call someone to let them know your have fallen or use your lifeline if you haven't done so.
5. Sit and relax quietly.

Elder Tips are provided as a courtesy by
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