

Home Safety Checklist

We have developed this checklist to help you spot possible safety problems in your home and reduce the chances of fires, falls, and other accidents and injuries. Although some of the items on this list may not apply to you and your family, we hope that it gives you some ideas of how you can make your home a safer place to live. Please review this checklist every six months and track how the safety in your home has improved by following these suggestions.

Fire Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
Smoke alarms are installed on every level of my home and near sleeping areas.				
Carbon monoxide alarms are installed on every level of my home and near sleeping areas.				
I test my smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every month to make sure they are working properly.				
I have replaced the batteries in my alarms within the last year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change smoke detector batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings time. 				
I have a fire escape route and procedures in case of fire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A home fire escape plan should include two exits, usually a door and a window, from each room. 				
I practice my fire escape plan every 6 months during the day and at night.				
I have taught my child what to do in case of a fire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get low and go, follow the rehearsed escape plan, and meet at the planned meeting place outside the house. Do not go back inside for anything. 				
I have emergency numbers on or near all of my telephones.				
I have a telephone positioned low enough so that if I have an accident and I cannot stand, I can still reach the phone.				
I have a telephone in my bedroom in case a fire traps me there.				
My chimney is cleaned professionally at least once a year and I keep the chimney opening free from debris like leaves.				
My furnace, boiler, wood stove, fireplace, water heater, flues, and vents are professionally inspected each year.				

Fire Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
I keep space heaters, wood burning stoves, candles, and smoking materials at least 36 inches away from furniture, curtains, walls, and other flammable materials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never use an extension cord with a space heater. 				
I do not store flammable or combustible liquids inside my home.				
I never use the oven to heat my home.				
I do not operate a portable generator in or near my house.				
If food catches fire, I cover the pot or pan with a lid or turn off the oven and close the oven door.				
I know the "stop, drop, and roll" fire safety technique. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your clothes catch on fire, stop where you are, lower yourself to the floor and cover your face with your hands, and roll to smother the flames. 				
I have fire extinguishers in all areas where I work with open flames: kitchen, basement, garage, and near the fireplace. I know how to use them.				
I only use candles when I am in the room and blow them out before I leave the room.				

General Home Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
The floors throughout my home are even, slip resistant, and in good repair.				
The floors throughout my home are free from objects that can cause me to trip.				
I have nonskid pads under all of the rugs and throw rugs in my home or secure them with double-faces carpet tape. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid throw rugs whenever possible since they are a tripping hazard. 				
My carpet is in good repair, not loose or torn, and lies flat.				
Room entryways do not have raised door thresholds that could cause me to trip.				
Electrical and telephone cords are out of the flow of foot traffic in my home and run behind furniture, not under rugs or carpets or across doorways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical cords can become damaged by foot traffic if stored under carpets and rugs, becoming a fire hazard. 				
I check electrical cords periodically to make sure they are not worn, frayed, or damaged. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair cords that show wear and tear. 				

General Home Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
I do not overload electrical outlets and avoid using multiple extension cords.				
<p>To help me see at night I use night lights in hallways which are located away from drapes and other flammable materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cool or LED night lights that do not get hot. • If night lights are not available, keep a flashlight by the bedside to light the way to the bathroom. 				
The bulbs I use in the lamps in my home are appropriate for the fixture.				
Electrical outlets are not unusually warm or hot to the touch.				
All electrical switches and outlets have cover plates so that no wiring is exposed.				
I always unplug electrical appliances by pulling the plug, not the cord.				
I can turn on a light without having to walk into a dark room.				
I do not store items on the stairs that could be a tripping hazard.				
The stairs in my home have slip-resistant low-pile carpet or slip-resistant strips securely attached to each step.				
All the steps on my staircase are in good repair, not loose, broken, or worn.				
<p>My staircases are well lit and light switches are located at the top and bottom of each staircase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If light switches are not available, keep a working flashlight in a convenient place. 				
I have sturdy handrails that are easy to grab and run from the top to the bottom of both sides of my staircase.				
<p>I have my home address, emergency phone numbers, and 911 posted on or near all the telephones in my home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your home address is important for babysitters and caregivers who may be there when you are not. 				
<p>I have a well-stocked first aid kit easily available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include bandage strips (like Band-Aid), antibiotic ointment, antiseptic solution, cotton balls, disposable gloves, gauze pads, adhesive tape, scissors, eye wash/saline solution, and a first aid manual. Prepackaged kits are widely available. 				
<p>I store my firearms unloaded in a locked safe or with a secure trigger lock and the ammunition is stored in another locked location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure children cannot get the keys or combination of the lock to the firearms and ammunition. 				

General Home Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
My front door has a view panel or peep hole at the right height so I can see who is at the door before opening it.				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOMES WITH CHILDREN				
I use a hardware mounted gate (rather than a pressure mounted gate) that blocks the staircase to protect my child.				
My basement door is kept locked.				
My television, lamps, and other heavy items are secure so they will not tip over. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push the television as far back on the stand as possible. 				
Bookshelves and other furniture are secured with wall brackets so they cannot be tipped over. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove any items that are not secure that a child might be tempted to climb. 				
I have a screen or guard around my fireplace, wood stove, heater, and other heat source.				
I have matches and lighters stored in a cabinet with child locks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child that matches and lighters are not toys and are only to be used by adults. 				
All houseplants are kept away from children because some are poisonous.				
I know to call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or a physician if my child swallows something that may be poisonous. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep this number by all telephones. 				
I check every day to make sure there are no small parts, magnets, button batteries, coins, plastic bags, or other things within my child's reach that my child could choke on.				
I do not use latex balloons around my child.				
I have learned first aid, CPR, and emergency treatment for choking.				
I have stops on all windows to maintain a small opening or secured window guards to prevent my child from falling through.				
All the window drapery and blind cords in my home are out of my child's reach.				
I keep windows locked when they are closed and do not allow my child to open windows by himself. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child not to lean out of or play near open windows. 				
All tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are out of the reach of my child.				
I review home safety rules with my child.				

General Home Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
I have taught my child how to use the 911 system so he knows what to do in an emergency.				
I teach my child what to do when he sees a gun: Do not touch and tell an adult.				
All the electrical outlets in my home have plug protectors to avoid burns and shocks.				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS				
The doors inside my home can be unlocked from the outside in case of an emergency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is especially important in the bathroom and bedroom. 				
I always wear comfortable, slip-resistant, low-heeled footwear, never bare or stocking feet.				
The hems of my clothing are short enough to prevent tripping.				
I only carry small loads up and down the stairs and make more than one trip if necessary.				
The windows and doors in my home are easy to open and close and the locks are easy to operate.				
The lighting in my home in walkways and rooms in which I am likely to be reading is bright enough to see things easily. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good lighting helps prevent falls. 				
I have carpeting over concrete, ceramic, and marble floors to lessen the severity of an injury if I fall.				
I have either repaired or removed any wobbly chairs, ladders, and tables from my home.				
My chairs and sofas are high enough so that it is not difficult for me to stand up from them.				

Kitchen Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
Potholders, towels, curtains and other flammable items are located away from the stove.				
I have a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen and I know how to use it.				
I do not wear clothing with loose, flowing sleeves when cooking. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loose sleeves can catch on pot handles or catch on fire. Roll them up or secure with elastic or pins. 				
The oven and stove controls are clearly marked and easy to use.				
I have potholders handy and always use them when handling hot pots and pans.				

Kitchen Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
Electrical appliances are away from the sink and hot surfaces like the stove.				
My kitchen is well ventilated.				
The lighting in my kitchen is bright and even, especially over the stove, counters, and sink.				
I keep my drawers and cabinet doors closed when not in use.				
I store my cleaning products far away from my food.				
I wipe up spills as soon as they happen so that I will not slip.				
All of the outlets in my kitchen have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOMES WITH CHILDREN				
My refrigerator and freezer chest have child locks on them.				
I never leave my child in the kitchen alone when something is cooking on the stove or in the oven.				
I keep hot liquids away from my child.				
I use the back burners on my stove and always point the pot handles toward the back of the stove.				
I keep my child away from the stove when it is in use.				
I do not allow my child to retrieve food from the microwave.				
I test the temperature of all food before I give it to my child.				
Sharp knives and other sharp utensils are stored in a cabinet or drawer with child locks.				
Household cleaners are stored in a cabinet with child locks.				
Garbage cans are covered and out of my child's reach or in a cabinet with child locks.				
Appliances are unplugged when not in use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is especially important with toasters. Children can put things in the slot and get a shock. 				
My baby's high chair is sturdy and has a seat belt with a crotch strap. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always use both straps when your baby is in the high chair. 				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS				
The oven and refrigerator doors are easy to open.				
The items I use most often are easy to reach.				
I have a sturdy step stool with a handrail to use to reach things on high shelves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for a stool with a wide leg base with rubber tips. 				

Bedroom Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
I keep a flashlight near my bed in case there is a power outage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check batteries periodically to make sure they still have power, and keep spare batteries handy. 				
When I use an electric blanket, I make sure it is not folded, tucked in, or covered by other objects like comforters or pets.				
I always turn the electric blanket off before I go to sleep. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It can cause burns even at low heat. 				
My electric blanket cord is not pinched or crushed by the bed or between a wall or the floor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A hot water bottle is preferable to an electric blanket to prevent burns and fires. 				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOMES WITH CHILDREN				
Diaper changing supplies are always within reach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a hand on your baby at all times, even when using a safety belt. 				
The window coverings in my child's room are cordless to avoid strangulation.				
The slats on my baby's crib are no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide slats can trap your baby's head. 				
My baby's crib has a firm mattress and a fitted sheet. Pillows, comforters, and toys are kept out of the crib. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bulky items can cover your baby's face. 				
I make sure all the screws and bolts on my baby's crib are secure.				
I make sure the crib mattress fits snugly into the crib so my baby cannot slip between the mattress and crib.				
My child's toy chest does not have a cover so my child cannot become pinched or trapped, or is made of mesh so it is breathable.				
I do not use a space heater in my child's bedroom.				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS				
I have a sturdy lamp or light switch next to my bed.				
I have a stable night stand next to my bed for my glasses, telephone, and other items.				
I have a telephone next to my bed.				
The path from my bedroom to the bathroom is clear and has no clutter.				
There are no casters on my bed, table, or chairs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintended movements can cause falls. 				
I never smoke in the bedroom. I smoke only in a designated area of the house away from upholstered furniture.				

Bedroom Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
The height of my bed allows me to comfortably get in and out of bed.				

Bathroom Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
I have a slip-proof bath mat or rug near the bathtub.				
I have a rubber mat or nonskid texture strips inside my tub or shower.				
I have replaced my glass shower door with safety glass or plastic material.				
I keep soap, shampoo, and towels within easy reach while bathing.				
I do not use oils or creams in the bathtub or shower.				
I do not use a portable space heater in the bathroom. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to warm up the bathroom, turn the heater off and unplug it before bathing. 				
I store electrical appliances like shavers and hairdryers unplugged and away from the sink and tub.				
I keep my hot water at a temperature of 120 degrees F or lower (medium setting) to prevent scalds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the water run for 3 to 5 minutes and use a candy or meat thermometer to test the temperature. 				
I always test the water temperature with my hand before I get into the bathtub or shower.				
All of the outlets in my bathroom have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).				

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOMES WITH CHILDREN

I stay within arm's reach of my baby or child when he is in the bathtub. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowning can occur in just a few inches of water. Never leave children alone in the bathtub. 				
I store bathroom cleaners, medicines, cosmetics, and toiletries in a cabinet with child locks or in a location out of the reach of children. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure all medicines have child-resistant caps and that you discard all old medicine. 				
Razor blades, nail scissors, and other sharp tools are stored in a cabinet with a child lock.				
I always keep the toilet lid closed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children can drown in an open toilet. 				

Bathroom Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
The trashcan in the bathroom is covered.				
I keep the bathroom door closed at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will help keep your child out of the bathroom when you are not with him. 				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS				
I have grab bars to hold onto when I get in and out of the shower or tub (not a towel rack).				
I have grab bars near the toilet or a raised toilet seat to help me on and off more easily (not a towel rack). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is important if you have difficulty getting on and off the toilet. 				
I have a bath chair or bench outside the tub to help me get in and out more easily. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will help you get in and out of the tub. 				
I have a wall-mounted seat or waterproof bath seat inside the tub. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will help you if you have difficulty standing for long periods of time in the shower. 				
I have a handheld shower hose if I am unable to stand safely while showering.				

Outside Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
The steps, entryway, and walkway to my door are well lit.				
My garage door is easy to operate.				
My garage is adequately ventilated.				
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HOMES WITH CHILDREN				
My child's playground equipment is sturdy, level on the ground, and the bolts and screws are secure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover exposed bolts, screws, and sharp edges with plastic caps or tape. 				
I have at least 9 inches of mulch, shredded rubber, or wood chips under my child's playground equipment to cushion falls.				
I keep power tools, yard tools, and lawn mowers out of my child's reach.				
I keep my child inside when the grass is being cut.				
My garage door has a safety mechanism that automatically re-opens when striking an obstruction.				
My clothesline is high enough so my child can pass under it.				

Outside Safety	Yes	No	Don't Know	Does Not Apply
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS				
The steps and walkways at my home are free from holes, cracks, and splinters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make any needed repairs. 				
I can park my car close to the entrance of my home.				

What are some of the home safety changes you want to make?

References

American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Home Safety Checklist. Retrieved July 16, 2013, from <http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00123>.

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2008). *Home Safety Checklist*. AAP: Washington, DC.

American Association of Retired Persons. (2007). *Caregiving Checklist*. AARP: Washington, DC.

California Department of Aging, Senior Housing Information and Support Center. *Home Safety Checklist*. San Francisco Department of Health, San Francisco, CA.

Harris, J.L., (2001). *Home Safety Checklist for Families with Young Children*. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension: College Station, TX.

KidsHealth from Nemours Household Safety Checklists. Retrieved July 17, 2013, from http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/household_checklist.html.

Kirby, S., Vergara, M.L., and Sweaney, A. (2009). *Safety Begins at Home...in the Bathroom*. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, Athens, GA.

Kirby, S. *A Housing Safety Checklist for Older People*. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

National Fire Protection Association. *Home Fire Safety Checklist*. NFPA: Quincy, MA.

North Dakota Department of Health. (2010). *Home Safety Checklist: Are Children Safe in Your Home?* NDDOH: Bismarck, ND.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. *Safety for Older Consumers – Home Safety Checklist*. CPSC: Bethesda, MD.

Prepared by
 Elizabeth Corcoran, BS, MBA
 Trauma Injury Prevention and Outreach Coordinator