Home Safety

- Remove all clutter from the floor to prevent falls.
- Remove throw rugs and mats from the floor or replace them with ones with non-skid backing.
- Use bright lighting in your hallways, stairs and rooms.
- Set up chairs as rest points between long distances.
- Place a list of emergency numbers near your phone or on your phone’s contact list.
- Reduce the temperature on the water heater to 120 degrees or lower to prevent accidental scalding.
- Move frequently used items in the kitchen or bath to an area that is easy to reach to avoid climbing on step stools or chairs.
- Make sure all banisters, railings, and grab bars are securely attached to the wall. Consider installing a railing on both sides of each stairwell, and make sure that the railing extends beyond the top and bottom steps. If the railing stops short of the last step, it is possible to lose your balance and fall.
- Check towel racks and toilet paper holders that might be used to help stand up from the toilet or step out of the tub. These items should not be used for this purpose, so you should check periodically to see if all is secure.
- Install an intercom to the outside so visitors can be identified prior to entry.
- Secure furniture in place that is used to help rise from a chair. Check all furniture to determine if anything might give way if leaned on over time.
- Make sure that working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in place. Change batteries and clean out your medicine cabinet in fall and spring when you change your clocks.
- Keep a small fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
Moving about

• Before getting out of bed during the night, turn your bedside light on and allow your eyes to adjust.

• Always bend with your knees, using your legs, not your back, for strength. When moving objects, remember this - “push, don’t pull.”

• Carry a portable phone or cell phone with you if you do not have an emergency alert system.

• Do not pick up items on the floor without a reacher.

• Do not put items in your hands or around your wrists while walking with a walker. Carry items in a bag, pocket or over your shoulder.

Occupational therapists (OT)

OT’s are experts on strategies and equipment that enable people to carry out day-to-day activities despite impairments or activity limitations. Based on an evaluation, the OT can help you find easier ways to complete daily activities, such as preparing meals. An OT evaluates a person’s capabilities and the person’s physical and social environments.

Physical therapists (PT)

PTs assist by helping people get stronger (perhaps to regain use of an injured body part) and/or by providing pain relief techniques. A PT can help you practice safe fall recovery movements. A PT also conducts an evaluation of a person’s ability to walk or transfer from the bed, chair or toilet.

Ask your doctor if you think a visit from an OT or PT would be helpful for your loved one and you.