

Reducing fall risk – a safety checklist



Peace of Mind with Philips Lifeline

- Get prompt caring assistance at the push of a button, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Our new Lifeline with AutoAlert* option provides an added layer of protection by automatically placing a call for help if a fall is detected and you can't push your button.
- Continue living in the comfort of your own home.

Reducing fall risk at home

Gain confidence to maintain your independence

A study reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that preventing falls and the resulting injuries can reduce or delay the need to move to a long-term care facility.¹

Causes of falls in and around the home

Health and age-related changes

- Problems with balance
- Slow reflexes
- Poor eyesight
- Use of certain medications

Dangerous situations in the home

- Slippery floors
- Poor lighting
- Electrical cords in pathways
- Loose rugs
- Raised thresholds
- Clutter

For seniors, falls in and around the home are the most frequently occurring accident. In fact, falls are the leading cause of injury death among older adults.²

See the next sheet for a helpful checklist to help minimize the risk of falling.

1. Tinetti ME, Williams CS. Falls, injuries due to falls, and the risk of admission to a nursing home. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 1997;337:1279-1284.

2. Stevens, Judy, Ph.D. Falls Among Older Adults – Risk Factors and Prevention Strategies, NCOA Falls Free: Promoting a National Falls Prevention Action Plan, 2005, pg.3.

Use this checklist to minimize fall risk

Outside your home

- ✓ Paint the edges of outdoor steps and any steps that are especially narrow or are higher or lower than the rest.
- ✓ Paint outside stairs with a mixture of sand and paint for better traction. Keep outdoor walkways clear and well-lit.
- ✓ Clear snow and ice from entrances and sidewalks.

Inside your home

- ✓ Remove all extraneous clutter in your house.
- ✓ Keep telephone and electrical cords out of pathways.
- ✓ Tack rugs and glue vinyl flooring so they lie flat. Remove or replace rugs or runners that tend to slip, or attach nonslip backing.
- ✓ Ensure that carpets are firmly attached to the stairs.
- ✓ Do not stand on a chair to reach things. Store frequently used objects where you can reach them easily.

Keep a well-lit home

- ✓ Have a lamp or light switch that you can easily reach without getting out of bed.
- ✓ Use night lights in the bedroom, bathroom and hallways.
- ✓ Keep a flashlight handy.
- ✓ Have light switches at both ends of stairs and halls. Install handrails on both sides of stairs.
- ✓ Turn on the lights when you go into the house at night.

Bathroom tips

- ✓ Add grab bars in shower, tub and toilet areas.
- ✓ Use nonslip adhesive strips or a mat in shower or tub.
- ✓ Consider sitting on a bench or stool in the shower.
- ✓ Consider using an elevated toilet seat.

Use care walking

- ✓ Use helping devices, such as canes, as directed by your healthcare provider.
- ✓ Wear nonslip, low-heeled shoes or slippers that fit snugly. Avoid walking in stocking feet.

And don't forget...

- ✓ Review medications with your doctor or pharmacist. Some drugs, including over-the-counter drugs, can make you drowsy, dizzy and unsteady.
- ✓ Have your hearing and eyesight tested. Inner ear problems can affect balance. Vision problems make it difficult to see potential hazards.
- ✓ Discuss safe amounts of alcohol intake with your physician.
- ✓ Exercise regularly to improve muscle flexibility, strength, and balance. Talk to your healthcare provider about exercise programs that are right for you.
- ✓ If you feel dizzy or lightheaded, sit down or stay seated until your head clears. Stand up slowly to avoid unsteadiness.

In the event of a fall fast access to help is very important. Lifeline with AutoAlert can get you the help you need when you need it most. The AutoAlert option can get you help in two ways: you can either push the button at any time, or if AutoAlert detects a fall and you are unable to push your button, it can automatically place a call for help.



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*AutoAlert option is locally available at participating Lifeline programs. AutoAlert does not detect 100% of falls. If able, you should always press your button when you need help.

Call Lifeline today at
1-800-LIFELINE
(543-3546) or visit
www.lifelinesystems.com