

Checklist for Home Safety

The goal in preparing the home for a person with early onset Alzheimer's disease is to keep the surroundings as familiar as possible. By making adaptations to the home, you are creating a safer environment and helping your loved one remain independent for as long as possible. All of the items listed below do not have to be changed at once, and some may not apply to your loved one's living situation. You know your loved one better than anyone. Look at each room in the home through the eyes of your loved one to determine what can be changed to ensure their safety and security.

General Safety

- * Ensure there are working smoke detectors located throughout the home.
- * Keep flashlights easily accessible in each room of the home in case of a power outage.
- * If there are guns in the home, please remove them. However, if this cannot be done, then they should be locked in a fire-proof safe or have the firing pins removed.
- * Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers by each telephone.
- * Keep areas free of clutter to decrease the risk of falling.
- * Keep power tools and other dangerous equipment in a place that is not accessible to the person with Alzheimer's disease.
- * Place decorative decals on picture windows or patio doors, to keep your loved one from walking into the glass.
- * Remove or lock up all poisonous household items. Colorful cleaning products may be mistaken for food.
- * Use the brightest bulbs possible in lamps. This helps decrease shadows, which can be unsettling to the person with Alzheimer's disease.

Living Room

- * Remove sliding throw rugs as they can be a trip-and-fall hazard.
- * Remove clutter.
- * Tape down carpet edges that may be curled upwards.
- * Ensure there are no electrical or extension cords running across a pathway or underneath carpets as this can create a fire hazard.
- * Make sure floor lamps and electronics are located along the walls and out of pathways.
- * Create wide, straight, and clear pathways for ease of movement and access to other rooms in the home.

Hallways

- * Remove clutter or furnishings in pathways.
- * Remove throw rugs as they can be a trip-and-fall hazard.
- * Remove clutter.
- * Use the brightest light bulbs in the hallway lighting fixtures to ensure ease of movement and reduce shadows.

Kitchen

- * Make sure there is a working fire extinguisher located in the kitchen.
- * Clean out the refrigerator on a weekly basis and discard food items that have expired or are inedible.
- * As the disease progresses, you may need to place knives and sharp objects out of reach or utilize safety devices, such as child-proof locks, to limit access to these items.
- * Put all garbage out of sight.
- * Keep cleaning supplies in a locked place.
- * Remove spices or medicines from the counter.
- * If needed, you can put labels on the cabinets and drawers (i.e. plates, glasses, forks, spoons, etc.)
- * As the disease progresses, it may be necessary to remove the knobs from the stove or cover them so that the person in your care will not notice them.

Bedroom

- * Ensure a light is within arm's reach from the bed.
- * Use automatic night-lights in the bedroom to illuminate the pathway from the bed to the bathroom.
- * Remove clutter so paths are wide, straight and clear.
- * Remove throw rugs.

Bathroom

- * If you do not have a walk-in shower, it is recommended to get a shower chair with an extension that sits both inside and outside of the bathtub. This can help decrease the risk of falls.
- * Install grab bars in the bathtub/shower area.
- * Mark "Hot" and "Cold" above the faucets. It is recommended that you monitor the water temperature for your loved one as they may have decreased sensitivity to temperature.
- * Place nonskid decals on the bottom of the bathtub to make tub less slippery.
- * If it becomes difficult for your loved one to stand up from the toilet, you can place a raised toilet seat (with handles) over the toilet and it can make it easier for them to get up.
- * Remove or disable locks on bathroom doors.
- * If your loved one struggles to find the bathroom, you can place a picture of a toilet on the wall outside of the bathroom.