Fire and Fall Prevention for Older Adults

Each year, many older adults die or experience permanent disability after a home fire or fall. Adults, at age 65, are twice as likely to be killed or injured by falls or fires, compared to the population at large.

TIPS

Prevent Fires:

- ✓ Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and test them monthly.

- ✓ Keep yourself, and anything at least three feet from space heaters, portable heaters, and wood stoves. Turn off and unplug heaters when you leave your home or go to bed.

- ✓ Use large, deep ashtrays. Wet cigarette butts and ashes before emptying ashtrays. Never smoke when drowsy, lying down, or in bed.

- ✓ Wear tight-fitting or rolled-up sleeves when cooking. Use oven mitts to handle hot pans and never leave cooking unattended.

- ✓ "STOP, DROP, and ROLL," if your clothes catch on fire.

- ✓ Immerse burns in cool water for 10-15 minutes. If burn is severe, get medical attention. Never put butter or grease on a burn.

- ✓ Know two ways out of each room, and plan and practice your fire escape. In a fire, get out and stay out. Call 911 after you've escaped from your home.

Prevent Falls:

- ✓ Exercise regularly to build strength and improve balance and coordination.

- ✓ Keep stairs and walkways clear of tripping hazards.

- ✓ See an eye specialist once a year.

- ✓ Improve the lighting in your home. Turn on the lights before using the stairs and install a night-light along the path between the bedroom and bathroom.

- ✓ Use non-slip mats in the tub or shower.

- ✓ Use only throw rugs with rubber, nonskid backing.

- ✓ Install handrails along both sides of the stairs.

- ✓ Wear sturdy, well-fitted, low-heeled shoes with non-slip soles.

- ✓ Have a pharmacist review all your medications.