

Consumer Factsheet

Home safety resources for older people

Safety in the home is extremely important for all, especially for older people and children. Home hazards may include poorly designed or constructed building elements, electric or electronic equipment, appliances, decorative or personal items, etc, that obstruct the ordinary use of a space or system. There are hazards in every household; however, it is the physical and mental abilities of the residents that determine the severity of their impact.

Common hazards in the home are floor mats or rugs that are not level, slippery floors, poorly lit spaces, cables under rugs, smoke alarms that have not been checked or replaced for a long time, etc. Slips and falls and home fires are the most common results of these home issues which can have dangerous or even fatal consequences for older people.

If you are an older person or caring for an older person and you are concerned about your/their safety in the home, there are checklists that can help you identify hazardous elements in the home and guides with recommendations on how to mitigate the risks. This Factsheet includes a list of home safety checklists and guides that you can choose from.

Home Safety Checklists

The following checklists can be accessed, downloaded and/or filled in for free. Some also include suggestions on how to fix or maintain systems in your home.

Check for Safety: A home fall prevention checklist for older adults

The [Check for Safety](#) is a simple checklist that can be administered by the older people themselves or their family or carers. It includes 5 areas: stairs and steps, floors, kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms. Relevant questions for each area are used to highlight the hazards that might exist in each home space. Then mitigation strategies are proposed.

Check for Safety is an easy to fill in checklist but is in no way exhaustive. It can be downloaded from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [website](#), along with other useful resources for older people and for health professionals.

Stay on your Feet

Stay on Your Feet home safety checklist provided by [Injury Matters](#) and funded by the Western Australian Department of Health, is an online questionnaire of common home hazards, i.e., floors, lighting, stairs, steps and ladders, walkways, furniture, storage, and outdoor spaces. The older person or their carers need to answer all questions with a yes or a no and after submitting they can get recommendations on how to improve their homes. The questionnaire and the recommendations are provided for free at the Stay on your Feet [website](#).

Home Safety Checklist

[Home Safety Checklist](#) from Home Instead Senior Care with material from the [University at Buffalo Home Safety Self-Assessment Tool](#), is a survey that can be administered by Occupational Therapists or carers of older people. It covers safety hazards commonly found in each room of a home and provides recommendations on how to mitigate the problems. Even though most of the questions are easy to understand and answer, some of them can only be answered by professionals who know how features should be like. For example, a carer can provide an empirical answer to the question: “Is the toilet the correct height?”, according to the older person’s abilities, but would not be able to answer whether the toilet has the standard recommended height.

Senior Safety & Well-being Checklist

This checklist is addressed to carers and family of older people and it helps determine hazards in the home environment. However, this checklist also includes questions about the person and their ability to perform daily tasks, such as preparing their own meals or taking their medication as directed. [Senior Safety & Well-being Checklist](#) can be downloaded from the A Place for Mom [website](#).

Home Fire Safety Checklist for Older Adults

Home Fire Safety Checklist for Older Adults is an Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) document with easy to answer questions about fire hazards and safety equipment for homes. Some older people might require assistance from a carer to understand the terminology in some of the questions. The [Home Fire Safety Checklist for Older Adults](#) can be downloaded from the ESFI [website](#).

Guides for improving home safety

The following guides include suggestions about how to fix issues or maintain systems in your home.

AARP HomeFit Guide

A 36-page guide aiming to assist people live safely and comfortably in their homes. It includes 12 areas of the home with recommendations for elements in each area. Even though it is a lengthy document, it includes helpful images and symbols. The guide can be read or ordered from the AARP [website](#). The AARP HomeFit Guide is also available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

The Safe Living Guide

The Safe Living Guide was developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada in 2005 and was last revised in 2015. It includes checklists and tips for older people that want to identify hazards and modify areas of their homes. It also provides advice on keeping fit and healthy, keeping track of medicine and assistive technology suggestions. The guide can be accessed through the Public Health Agency of Canada [website](#).

Remodelling today for a better tomorrow

A publication by the Hartford Center for Mature Market with advice and solutions for modifications for the kitchen and the bathroom for older people. The document can be accessed from the Hartford Center for Mature Market [website](#).

[Re]Build

ReBuild is a safety checklist for homes, developed by Rebuilding Together with material from other documents. The checklist can be found in the Rebuilding Together [website](#).

Where can I find more information?

- The HMinfo Evidence Based Practice Review: *Self-assessment tools for person-environment fit* available from the HMinfo website: www.homemods.info
- Public Health Agency of Canada. The Safe Living Guide—A guide to home safety for seniors. Ottawa, ON: Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015.:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors.html>
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- Stay on your Feet. <https://www.stayonyourfeet.com.au/>
- Home Instead Senior Care. <https://www.homeinstead.com/>
- A Place for Mom. <https://www.aplaceformom.com/>
- Electrical Safety Foundation International. <https://www.esfi.org/resource/home-fire-safety-checklist-for-older-adults-226>
- AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/>
- Public Health Agency of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/aging-seniors.html>
- Hartford Center for Mature Market. <https://www.thehartford.com/resources/mature-market-excellence/remodel>
- Rebuilding Together. <http://rebuildingtogethersacramento.org/>
- Other home modification resources on the HMinfo website: www.homemods.info

***This information was correct at time of printing.*