

## Home Safety Suggestions

Excerpts from National Institute on Aging

You can't anticipate every problem your parent may have, but these suggestions may be used as a starting point to make sure your parent's environment is as safe as you can make it.

- Are the stairs manageable or is a ramp needed?
- Are there any tripping hazards at exterior entrances or inside the house (throw rugs, for example)?
- Are any repairs needed?
- Is the house well lit inside and out? Do any light bulbs need to be replaced?
- Is there at least one stairway handrail that extends beyond the first and last steps on each flight of stairs?
- Are there carpeting or safety grip strips on stairs?
- Is there clutter, which can cause disorientation and confusion and increase the risk of falling?
- Are all walk areas free of furniture and extension and electrical cords?
- If a walker or wheelchair is needed, can the house be modified? Perhaps putting in a ramp at the front door.
- Is there food in the fridge? Is any of it spoiled? Are there staple foods (such as cereal, sugar, canned soups) in the cabinets?
- Are bills being paid?
- Is mail piling up?
- Is the house clean?

It is sometimes easier to change a place than a person. Making the house safer for a person with memory problems might include: (caregiver in home)

1. Always lock all doors and windows to prevent your parent from wandering.
2. Making sure all potentially harmful items, such as medications, weapons, machinery, or electrical cords are put away in a safe, preferably locked place, when not in use.
3. Using child-resistant caps on medicine bottles, childproof latches on cabinets, and childproof plugs in unused outlets.