



Friends of St. John the Caregiver

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From *A Catholic Guide to Caring for Your Aging Parent*
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A Home Safety Checklist for Family Caregivers

Kitchen

- Items are kept in lower cabinets
- A sturdy step stool is available (depending on care-receiver's ability)
- There is a place to set groceries
- The stove and oven are turned off
- Enough storage is available to avoid clutter
- Towels, dishcloths, and curtains are not near the stove
- Oven mitts (not towels used as pot holders) are available
- Water temperature in the water heater is set below 120 degrees Fahrenheit
- Electric wiring is grounded where there's water
- Appliances are unplugged when not in use
- Leftover food is properly stored and eaten or disposed of before it spoils

Does your loved one:

- Wear appropriate clothes when cooking? (No long, billowy sleeves, for example.)
- Always remain in the kitchen when cooking?
- Wipe up spills immediately?

Bathroom

- Grab bars (not just a towel rack) are installed in the bathroom
- A grab bar is installed beside the toilet
- Soap is within reach when bathing
- The bathtub or shower has a bath mat
- A bath chair is in the tub/shower
- The toilet has a raised seat
- There is non-slip flooring or a rug for when the floor is wet
- There is a handheld shower head
- Water temperature in the water heater is set below 120 degrees Fahrenheit
- The door does not have a lock or else a key is readily available
- Electrical appliances are unplugged when not in use
- Electric wiring is grounded where there's water

Bedroom

- A lamp is accessible from the bed and easy to switch on or off
- Night lights are in the bedroom, the hall, and the bathroom
- A flashlight is by the bed
- Hot pads and electric blankets are in good condition

Does your loved one

- Use a hot pad and/or an electric blanket in a safe manner?

Security

- Doors, including the garage door and the door leading from the garage into the house, are locked
- Windows and sliding doors are locked
- There is a peephole in the door and a screen/security door
- An emergency alarm system is installed
- Emergency addresses and phone numbers are by the phone and written in large print
- Phone is cordless to reduce risk of falls
- Locks have dead bolts (but not a two-key system, which makes it harder to get out)
- If there are bars on the windows, they have a quick-release latch

Does you loved one

- Come home alone to an empty house?

Outside

- Walks and driveway are free of wet leaves, snow, ice, and cracks in concrete
- Door has a mat for wiping wet feet
- Garden tools are put away
- Bushes are cut back from the walks and windows
- Outdoor lights have motion detectors
- Handrails are installed
- A ramp is installed, if needed
- Front door is well lit

Lighting

- Lighting shines from several angles to avoid shadows
- Tops and bottoms of stairs are well lit
- A light switch is by the front door
- Daylight comes in through windows
- Correct wattage bulbs are installed in lamps and fixtures

Stairs

- All stairs have handrails
- Handrails line the full length of the stairway
- Handrails are a different color than the wall
- Stairs are in good condition
- There are no rugs at the tops or bottoms of stairs
- There are no frayed rugs or runners on stairs
- Color-contrast paint strips are used on the edges of steps if a loved one has trouble with vision

Does your loved one:

Use stairs for storage?

Living Room and Floor Plan

Rugs have non-slip backs

Rugs are free of curled edges that would cause tripping

Hallways are at least four feet wide

Halls are free of furniture, boxes, storage, and other clutter

Walkways from room to room, bedroom to bathroom are clear

Cords for phones, lamps, appliances are secured and out of walkways

Chairs have arms for support

Furniture is sturdy

Furniture is spaced four feet apart

Depth of carpet nap is not a hindrance if a loved one has trouble with mobility

No items are stacked in walkways

Space heaters are placed at least three feet from flammable items

Extension cords and outlets are not overloaded

All cords, outlets, and switches are in good repair

Fire Safety

Smoke alarms are installed on each floor and in or by the bedroom

Smoke alarms are tested on a regular basis and batteries are replaced as needed

Smoke alarms are adapted if a loved one is hearing impaired

Fire extinguisher is easily accessible

Fire escape plan is established

Escape routes are clear of clutter

Fireplace has a screen

Carbon monoxide detector is installed

Does you loved one:

Smoke?

Follow rules for safety when smoking?

Special Situations

House is child-proofed if young children are coming to visit

Area where medication is taken is well lit

Precautions are taken if pets are in the house

Precautions are taken if firearms are in the house

For more free information, visit YourAgingParent.com, a program of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver.

To receive a free copy of "The Little Book of Caregiver Prayers," send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Friends of St. John the Caregiver, P.O. Box 320, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043.