

HEADS UP! SENIORS

Use this checklist from the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey, to identify potential improvements for your home and your life.

MY LIFESTYLE

GETTING AROUND

- I wear supportive, low-heeled, non-slip shoes. Even at home I keep my shoes on to avoid slipping in my socks or stockings.
- In wet weather, I wear non-slip boots or rubbers and avoid slippery surfaces.
- I pay attention to floors in public buildings, especially if they are waxed or wet.
- I am a defensive walker, watching for drivers, bicyclists and rollerbladers.
- When getting out of a vehicle, I take my time, especially if the ground is uneven.
- If recommended by my health care provider, I use my cane, walking stick or walker.
- I leave plenty of time to get to my destination - I never rush.
- I plan ahead so that I do not go out during rush hour, darkness or bad weather.

HEALTH

- My vision and hearing have been checked within the past year.
- I take my reading glasses off while I am not reading.
- I have reviewed my medications with my doctor and have talked about the possible side effects or interactions.
- My medications are clearly labeled and I take them only as prescribed. I eat nutritious, balanced meals with adequate calcium and vitamin D.
- To maintain strength and balance, I exercise regularly (with doctors approval).
- To avoid negative effects on my judgement, I moderate my alcohol consumption.
- I engage in activities that stimulate my mind and keep my brain active.

IN GENERAL

- I have an answering machine or portable phone - I do not rush to answer the phone.
- I have arranged for daily contact with a friend or family member. I ask for assistance with heavy work.
- I keep an eye out for dangers or hazards.
- I am careful not to get up too quickly, especially after lying down, resting or eating. I wear sunglasses on sunny days to cut down on the glare and protect my eyes.
- I discourage my pets from sleeping in pathways or underfoot.
- Visiting children are taught to pick toys up off the floor, the stairs or in the hallway.

Heads-up! Seniors is a service of the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey. Funding is provided by The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Fund and by The New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety.



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MY HOME

STAIRWAYS, HALLWAYS AND ENTRANCES

- All stairs and stair coverings are in good repair.
- Handrails are sturdy and run the full length of stairs.
- All stairways are well lit. I can clearly see the outline of each step going down.
- Hallways and entrances are well lit indoors and out.
- Stairways, hallways and entrances are kept clear and free of clutter.
- Sidewalks and walkways are level and free of cracks or holes.
- Pathways and steps are free of ice, snow, newspapers and leaves.

BEDROOM

- I keep a working flashlight and telephone by the bed.
- There is a light switch or lamp within reach of the bed.
- The bed is right at the proper height to allow easy access.

BATHROOMS

- Tubs and showers have a non-skid mat, decals, abrasive strips and/or non-slip surface.
- Sturdy grab bars or handrails are installed by the toilet, and in tubs and showers.
- Tub seat, hand-held shower and/or raised toilet seat with arms are used if needed.
- Bathroom rugs have non-skid backing. Bathroom floors have a non-slip surface.

LIVING AREAS

- Papers, magazines, books, shoes and boxes are kept off the floor.
- I can turn on the light in each room without having to walk through dark areas.
- Nightlights are used, especially between the bed and bathroom.
- Cords and wires are not stretched across pathways or under rugs.
- Carpet, tile and floorboards lie flat and are in good repair.
- I do not use loose rugs or unsecured mats in or around my home.
- Area rugs have non-slip backing or are secured with double-sided tape on all sides.
- Furniture is arranged to prevent tripping and pathways are kept clear.
- Work and storage areas are organized so they are within easy reach.
- There is always a phone within easy reach. Emergency numbers are posted.
- I always use a sturdy stepstool or ladder to reach high places - never a chair.
- I never climb a stepstool or ladder when I am alone.
- Spills are wiped up immediately to prevent slipping.