



# Home Safety Checklist

[www.homecaresolutions.ie](http://www.homecaresolutions.ie)

## Helping make your home a Safer Environment



The safety of our clients is of the utmost importance to us. We are really focused on ensuring the wellbeing of our clients in their home. We developed this “Home Safety Checklist” as part of our care plan to help you reduce the hazards in your home and reduce the risk of injury to your family member.

This checklist will empower you to identify the hazards and enable you to put a plan in place to make changes that will make your home a safer environment for your elder relative.

Simply take this checklist and walk through your home marking “YES” or “NO” to answer each question. You can then use this as a guide to take action to correct the risks.

If you have any concerns, talk to us and we will be happy to support you.

*Ciara Conneely*      *Virna Mahon*

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Co-Founders

## ALL AREAS of the Home

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <p><b>Check all electrical, telephone and computer cords; rugs, runners and mats. Check smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, electrical outlets and switches and bulbs. Don't forget space heaters, wood burning stoves.</b></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are these cords placed out of traffic flow?</b></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are cords out from beneath furniture, carpet and rugs?</b><br/> <i>Remember cords that stretch across walkways may cause tripping. Arrange the furniture so outlets are available for lamps and appliances without using extension cords. If extensions are required then place them on the floor against a wall and tape them there.</i></p> |     |    |

## In the Kitchen

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <p><b>Check and make sure all cords, the lighting, stools and rugs are out of the walkway.</b></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>The cooker / stove: Are towels and curtains away from fire hazard?</b><br/> <i>Storing non-cooking equipment like pot holders, dish towels, or plastic utensils on or near the cooker or gas hob could result in fires or burns. Store flammable and combustible items away from the hob and oven. Remove any towels hanging on oven handles.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Do you wear clothing with short or close-fitting sleeves while you are cooking?</b><br/> <i>Long sleeves are more likely to catch fire than are short sleeves. Long sleeves are also more apt to catch on pot handles, overturning pots and pans and causing scalds. Roll back long, loose sleeves or fasten them with pins or elastic bands while you are cooking.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are kitchen ventilation systems functioning properly and are they in use while you are cooking?</b><br/> <i>Indoor air pollutants may accumulate to unhealthy levels in a kitchen where gas or kerosene-fire appliances are in use. Use ventilation systems or open windows to clear air of vapours and smoke.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Are all extension cords and appliance cords located away from the sink areas?</b><br/> <i>Electrical appliances and power cords can cause shock or electrocution if they come in contact with water. Cords can also be damaged by excess heat. Move cords and appliances away from sink areas and hot surfaces. Move appliances closer to wall outlets or to different outlets so you won't need extension cords. If extension cords must be used, install wiring guides so that cords will not hang near sink, or working areas. Consider adding new outlets for convenience and safety.</i></p> |     |    |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Does good, even lighting exist over the cooker/hob, sink, and counter top work areas, especially where food is sliced or cut?</b></p> <p><i>Low lighting and glare can contribute to burns or cuts. Improve lighting. Open curtains and blinds (unless this causes too much glare). Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage for the fixture, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.) Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing the blinds or curtains. Install additional light fixtures under cabinet or over counter top lighting. Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.</i></p> |  |  |
| <p><b>Is the step stool in good repair?</b></p> <p><i>Standing on chairs, boxes, or other makeshift items to reach high shelves can result in falls. If you don't have a step stool, consider buying one. Choose one with a handrail that you can hold onto while standing on the top step. Before climbing on any step stool, make sure it is fully opened and stable. Tighten screws and braces on the step stool. Discard step stools with broken parts.</i></p>  |  |  |

## In the Living Room/Family Room

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <p><b>Check all rugs and runners, electrical and telephone cords, lighting, the fireplace and chimney, the telephone area, and all passageways.</b></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are chimneys clear from accumulations of leaves and other debris that can clog them?</b></p> <p><i>Did you know that a clogged chimney could cause a poorly burning fire resulting in poisonous fumes and smoke coming back into the house? Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Has the chimney been cleaned within the last year?</b></p> <p><i>A burning wood fireplace can cause a build-up of a tarry substance or creosote inside the chimney. This material can ignite and result in a serious chimney fire. Have the chimney checked and cleaned by a registered or licensed professional.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Check lighting in hallways. Are passageways between rooms and other heavy traffic areas well lit?</b></p> <p><i>Shadowed or dark areas can hide tripping hazards. Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.) Install night-lights. Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing blinds or curtains. Consider using additional lamps or light fixtures. Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.</i></p> |     |    |
| <p><b>Furniture, boxes, or other items could be an obstruction or tripping hazard, especially in the event of an emergency or fire. Rearrange furniture to open passageways and walkways. Remove boxes and clutter.</b></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Remember; check the Living Room/Family Room and passageways for all items under "All Areas of the Home" above.</b></p>  |     |    |

## In the Bathroom

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <p><b>In the bathroom, check bath and shower areas, water temperature, rugs and mats, lighting, small electrical appliances, and storage areas for medications.</b><br/> <i>Wet soapy tile or porcelain surfaces are especially slippery and may contribute to falls. Use non-skid mats in the bath and shower, and on the bathroom floor.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Do baths and showers have at least one, preferably two grab bars?</b><br/> <i>Grab bars can help you get into and out of your bath or shower, and can help prevent falls. Check existing bars for strength and stability, and repair if necessary. Attach grab bars through the tile, to structural supports in the wall or install bars specifically designed to attach to the sides of the bath. If you are not sure how it is done, get someone who is qualified to assist you.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Is the temperature 120 degrees or lower?</b><br/> <i>Water temperature above 120 degrees can cause tap water scalds.</i><br/>           NOTE: <i>If the water heater does not have a temperature setting, you can use a thermometer to check the temperature of the water at the tap. Always check water temperature by hand before entering bath or shower. Taking baths, rather than showers, reduces the risk of a scald from suddenly changing water temperatures.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Check Lighting: Is a light switch located near the entrance to the bathroom?</b><br/> <i>A light switch near the door will prevent you from walking through a dark area. Install a night-light. Inexpensive lights that plug into outlets are available. Consider replacing the existing switch with a “glow switch” that can be seen in the dark.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Check Small Electrical Appliances: Are small electrical appliances such as hair dryers, shavers, curling irons etc. unplugged when not in use?</b><br/> <i>Even an appliance that is not turned on, such as a hair-dryer, can be potentially hazardous if it is left plugged in. If it falls into water in a sink or bath while plugged in, it could cause a lethal shock. Unplug all small appliances when not in use. Never reach into water to retrieve an appliance that has fallen in without being sure the appliance is unplugged.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Check Medications: Are all medicines stored in the containers that they came in and are they clearly marked?</b><br/> <i>Medications that are not clearly and accurately labelled can be easily mixed up. Taking the wrong medicine or missing a dosage of medicine you need, can be dangerous. Be sure that all containers are clearly marked with the contents, doctor’s instructions, expiration date, and patient’s name. Dispose of outdated medicines properly.</i><br/><br/> <i>**Request non-child-resistant closures from your pharmacist only when you cannot use child-resistant closures** NOTE: Many poisonings occur when children visiting grandparents go through the medicine cabinet or grandmother’s purse. In homes where grandchildren or youngsters are frequent visitors, medicines should be purchased in containers with child-resistant caps and the caps properly closed after each use. Store medicines beyond the reach of children.</i></p> |     |    |

## In Stairways

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <p><b>For all stairways, check lighting, handrails, and the condition of the steps and coverings.</b></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Check Lighting: Stairs should be lit so that each step, particularly the step edges, can be clearly seen while going up and down stairs. The lighting should not produce glare or shadows along the stairway.</b></p> <p><i>Use the maximum wattage bulb allowed by the light fixture. (If you do not know the correct wattage, use a bulb no larger than 60 watts.) Reduce glare by using frosted bulbs, indirect lighting, shades or globes on light fixtures, or partially closing blinds and curtains. Have a qualified person add additional light fixtures.</i></p> |     |    |
| <p><b>Make sure that the bulbs you use are the right type and wattage for the light fixture.</b></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Are light switches located at both the top and bottom of the stairs?</b></p> <p><i>Even if you are very familiar with the stairs, lighting is an important factor in preventing falls. You should be able to turn on the lights before you use the stairway from either end. If no other light is available, keep an operating flashlight in a convenient location at the top and bottom of the stairs. Install night-lights at nearby outlets. Consider installing switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Check Steps: Do the steps allow secure footing?</b></p> <p><i>Worn treads or worn or loose carpeting can lead to insecure footing, resulting in slips or falls. Try to avoid wearing only socks or smooth-soled shoes or slippers when using stairs. Make certain the carpet is firmly attached to the steps all along the stairs. Consider refinishing or replacing worn treads, or replacing worn carpeting. Paint outside steps with paint that has a rough texture, or use abrasive strips.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are steps even and have the same size and height?</b></p> <p><i>Even a small difference in step surfaces or riser heights can lead to falls. Mark any steps, which are especially narrow or have risers that are higher or lower than the others. Be especially careful of these steps when using the stairs.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Are the coverings on the steps in good condition?</b></p> <p><i>Worn or torn coverings or nails sticking out from coverings could snag your foot or cause you to trip. Repair coverings. Remove coverings. Replace coverings.</i></p>   |     |    |
| <p><b>Can you clearly see the edges of the steps?</b></p> <p><i>Falls may occur if the edges of the steps are blurred or hard to see. Paint edges of outdoor steps white to see them better at night. Add extra lighting. If you plan to carpet your stairs, avoid deep pile carpeting or patterned or dark coloured carpeting that can make it difficult to see the edges of the steps clearly.</i></p>  |     |    |
| <p><b>Is anything stored on the stairway, even temporarily?</b></p> <p><i>People can trip over objects left on stairs, particularly in the event of an emergency or fire. Remove all objects from the stairway</i></p>  |     |    |

## In the Bedrooms

|  | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| <b>In the bedroom, check all rugs and runners, electrical and telephone cords and all areas around beds.</b>   |     |    |
| <b>Are lamps or light switches within reach of each bed?</b><br><i>Lamps or switches located close to each bed will enable people getting up at night to see where they are going. Rearrange furniture closer to switches or move lamps closer to beds and install night-lights.</i>   |     |    |
| <b>Are ashtrays, smoking materials or other fire sources (heaters, hot plates, teapots etc.) located away from beds or bedding?</b><br><i>Burns are a leading cause of accidental death among the elderly. Smoking in bed is a major contributor to this problem. Remove sources of heat or flame from areas around beds. Don't smoke in bed.</i>  |     |    |
| <b>Is anything covering your electric blanket when in use?</b><br><i>"Tucking in" electric blankets or placing additional coverings on top of them can cause excessive heat build-up which can start a fire.</i>   |     |    |
| <b>Do you avoid "tucking in" the sides or ends of your electric blanket?</b><br><i>Use electric blankets according to the manufacturer's instructions. Don't allow anything on top of the blanket while it is in use. (This includes other blankets or comforters, even pets sleeping on top of the blanket.) Don't set electric blankets so high that they could burn someone who falls asleep while they are on.</i> |     |    |
| <b>Do you ever go to sleep with a heating pad while turned on?</b>   |     |    |
| <b>Is there a telephone close to your bed?</b><br><i>**In case of an emergency, it is important to be able to reach the telephone without getting out of bed**</i>   |     |    |

## Fuse Box / Circuit Breakers

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <b>If fuses are used, are they the correct size for the circuit?</b><br><i>Replacing a correct size fuse with a larger size fuse can present a serious fire hazard. If the fuse in the box is rated higher than that intended for the circuit, excessive current will be allowed to flow and possibly overload the outlet and house wiring to the point that a fire can begin. Be certain that correct-size fuses are used. (If you do not know the correct sizes, consider having an electrician identify and label the sizes to be used.)</i> |     |    |



**HELPFUL HINT: PUT A REMINDER IN YOUR PHONE TO DO A REGULAR SAFETY CHECK OF THE HOUSE**

## About Homecare Solutions



Homecare Solutions was established in 2007. We are an owner managed, independent, non-medical homecare provider based in Naas, serving the Kildare, West Wicklow and greater Dublin areas. Homecare Solutions will provide you with hours of support for your family based on their needs. We provide experienced, trained carers to look after your family member in the comfort of their own home.

Our Mission is to provide compassionate *Person-Centred Care* to all our clients and their families by our Nurse led Team. We take the time to listen and to understand each individual's care needs. Our aim is to provide personalised home care that puts the needs, interests and wishes of our clients at the heart of everything we do.



We work with



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