HOME SAFETY AND THE PREVENTION OF FALLS

YOUR HOME:
• Eliminate hazards and make your home as safe as possible.
• Chairs with higher seats and solid armrests are easier to get in and out of.
• Do not use throw rugs.
• Cover uneven thresholds.
• Move all electrical cords from pathways.
• Keep closets free of clutter.
• Install smoke alarms and have an escape plan in case there is a fire.
• Consider personal safety and medical alarms. “Help! I’ve fallen and can’t get up.”
• Post numbers for police, fire department, poison control and doctor near the phone.
• Use 100-watt light bulbs to make rooms well lit.
• Consider keeping a portable phone near you, to prevent rushing to answer the phone in another room.

YOUR KITCHEN:
• Avoid reaching for things that are too high.
• Put dishes used the most within easy reach.
• Place things in cabinets at waist level.
• Buy assistive devices for the kitchen, such as reachers to get things out of cabinets.
• Use plastic or nonbreakable dishware.
• While using the stove, turn all handles away from the edge of the stove.
• Wipe up spills as soon as they occur.
• Have potholders within easy reach.
• Place a rubber mat in front of the sink.

YOUR BATHROOM:
• Use paper or plastic cups instead of glass.
• Use nonskid rugs on the floor.
• Use skid resistant (rubber) bathtub mats.
• Have grab bars by the toilet, bathtub and shower.
• If possible, get faucets that turn off and on easily.
• Never lock the bathroom door.
• Have someone check the water heater temperature. It should be less than 120 degrees.
• Check water temperature from running faucet with your elbow.
YOUR BEDROOM:
- Have a light within reach of your bed and use a night light.
- If you need glasses to see well, place them within reach.
- Have your bed at a level that’s easy to get in and out of.
- Keep a flashlight with fresh batteries by your bed.
- If you have to get up often in the night to go to the bathroom, consider a bedside commode or urinal.
- Get out of bed slowly and sit for a minute before you stand up.
- If you have a cane or walker — use it!

YOUR STAIRS:
- Remove all clutter from stairs.
- Install adequate lighting for stairs.
- Replace any worn or frayed stairs or stair covering.
- Have sturdy hand rails in place on one or both sides of the stairs.
- Install ramp or chair lifts for anyone unable to climb the stairs.

TAKING CARE OF YOU:
- Many accidents can be prevented by staying in good mental and physical health and improving safety habits.
- Get regular medical checkups and eye exams.
- Get a hearing test if you must often have others repeat themselves.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise to increase your flexibility and reduce the risk of falls. Check with your medical provider before starting any exercise program. Also, ask about exercises that will improve your balance.
- Know all your medicines (prescribed, over-the-counter and supplements). Make sure all medicines have labels. Tell your provider and pharmacist about all the medicines you take.
- Talk to your provider about side effects you may have with your medicines.
- Take good care of your feet.
  - If you have thick nails, corns or pain in your feet, tell your doctor or nurse.
  - Wear good fitting shoes with nonslip soles.
  - Avoid high heels and walking around in bare feet, socks, stockings and scuffs.
- Take your time on steps and curbs.
- Avoid alcohol use.
- If you use a wheelchair, make sure it is locked when getting in and out of it.
- Use your eyeglasses, hearing aid(s), walker, canes or any other aids if you need them.