



Hospice of the Valleys

Basic Home Safety Instructions

These safety instructions are provided to assist you in identifying safety hazards in your home. You are responsible for correcting any hazards identified.

GENERAL SAFETY

- Keep in touch with others. If you live alone, ask a neighbor, friend, or family member to check on you each day.
- Get up slowly. Because of certain changes in blood circulation, it is best to get up from a chair or bed slowly and to turn your head slowly to avoid dizziness.
- Don't hurry. Many accidents happen because people try to do things too quickly. Take time to be safe.
- Carrying objects—Make sure your view isn't blocked. Get a firm grip. Lift with your legs (knees bent, back straight), and walk slowly. Get help for heavy or awkward objects.
- Use a solid step stool or ladder, not a chair or box, if you must climb to reach a high place.
- Check hot water temperatures to prevent burns. Experts suggest setting hot water at 100 degrees (F) or lower.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

Walkways

- Remove throw rugs whenever possible to avoid tripping.
- If you can't remove throw rugs, use rugs with non-skid backing to avoid slipping.
- Repair or replace torn carpeting to avoid tripping.
- Make the transition between types of flooring as even as possible and secure to prevent slipping.
- Don't walk on freshly washed or waxed floors until they are dry.
- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Avoid wearing socks, smooth-soled shoes or slippers on uncarpeted floors.
- Mark sliding glass doors with stickers to prevent someone from walking through.



Stairs

- Make sure handrails are well anchored on both sides of the stairway.
- Non-skid treads can be placed on wooden stairs to prevent slipping.
- Make sure carpeting is secure.

Furniture Layout

- Arrange furniture so that pathways are not cluttered.
- Chairs/tables need to be sturdy and stable enough to support a person leaning on them.
- Pad furniture with sharp edges and corners.

Lighting

- Be sure that your lighting is ample to prevent falls and to assure that you can read medication labels and instructions easily.
- Good lighting in hallways, stairs, and bathrooms is important.

BATHROOM SAFETY

Bathtub

- Install skid-resistant strips or a rubber mat.
- Use a bath seat if it is too difficult to stand during a shower or to get out of the tub.
- Install grab bars on the side of the tub or shower for balance.
- DO NOT use the soap dish or towel bars for balance - these can pull out of the wall.

Toilet

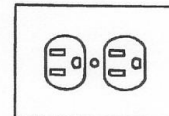
- Use an elevated toilet seat or commode if you need support getting on and off of the toilet or you are not able to bend your hip normally after surgery.
- Install grab bars around the toilet if you need more leverage to get off the toilet.

Doors

- Avoid locking bathroom doors or use only locks that can be opened from both sides when you may need assistance in the bathroom.

KITCHEN SAFETY

- Mark "ON" and "OFF" positions clearly on the dials on the stove.
- Use front burners of the stove to avoid reaching over burners. If there are children in the home, use back burners.
- Make sure pan/pot handles are not over other burners or over the edge of the stove
- Do not wear loose or dangling sleeves while cooking - they could easily catch fire.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Keep appliances away from water. Dropping water on an appliance or dropping the appliance into water (sink, tub, etc.) can cause electrocution.
- Use only appliances in good repair. Don't use lamps or appliances that appear to have a "short" when operated.
- Inspect cords. Don't use appliances with cords that are frayed or have wires exposed.
- Grounded plugs. Use grounded plugs or 3-prong adapters for medical equipment.
- Proper use of extension cords. Keep cords out of pathways to avoid excessive wear and prevent tripping. Do not overload outlets.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY - OXYGEN

- No smoking while oxygen is in use.
- Do not permit oil, grease, or other combustible materials to come in contact with oxygen equipment.
- Transport cylinders in proper carrier, and secure cylinders to prevent falling.
- Keep cylinders/concentrator in well-ventilated areas, (no closets)-avoid extreme heat.
- Avoid use of electrical appliances (razors, hair dryers, etc.) while oxygen is in use.
- Any electrical equipment in use near an oxygen system must be properly grounded with three pronged plugs.
- Make sure you properly assemble and test oxygen equipment before use.
- Set flow meter to the prescribed rate per your physician's orders.
- Make sure you have an adequate back-up supply of oxygen in case of emergency and/or evacuation.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY - DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

- Follow manufacturer/supplier instructions.
- Refer to supplier for any questions.



MEDICATION SAFETY

- Medications should be removed from storage only at administration times, and kept out of the reach of children, pets, and/or confused individuals.
- Store refrigerated drugs in a covered box, if available, inside the refrigerator, out of casual reach.
- Drugs labeled "For external use only" are kept separate from internal drugs.
- Store each individual family member's drugs separately to avoid mix-ups.
- Do not take prescription drugs prescribed for another person.

- Do not keep drugs on windowsills or other surfaces where there is extreme exposure to light or heat.
- Re-fill prescription medications several days before you use the last dose in the container.
- Check medication expiration dates and discard any that have expired, by flushing them down the toilet.
- Do not “catch-up” doses if you miss taking a dose of your medicine. Ask your nurse or doctor what you should do.
- Dispose of contaminated/soiled materials by placing them in a plastic bag and sealing the bag before throwing it away.

INFECTION PRECAUTIONS FOR THOSE GIVING DIRECT CARE TO PEOPLE IN THE HOME

- People caring for persons in the home use standard precautions designed to prevent blood and other body secretions from entering the body through any body opening, including cuts or open areas on the skin.

Hand washing before giving direct care protects the person who is susceptible to infection. **Hand washing** after direct care protects the caregiver. Here are some precautions to use when caring for someone with an infection or open wound:

- **WASH YOUR HANDS.** Keep your hands away from your mouth and face while working. Wash your hands before eating.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling any secretions or excretion, especially blood. Avoid direct skin contact with blood.
- Surfaces which have been visibly soiled with blood, fecal material or other body secretions require disinfection. Household bleach is the best disinfectant because it is effective against organisms not killed by other household disinfectants.
- Use plastic bags to dispose of soiled tissues, dressings, bandages and soiled gloves. Close and secure the bag tightly when discarding. Dispose of the bag in the garbage, as you would other solid waste. Needles are considered infectious waste and should be placed, intact, point downward and not capped, into a puncture resistant container immediately after use.
- At the end of physical care, **WASH YOUR HANDS.**

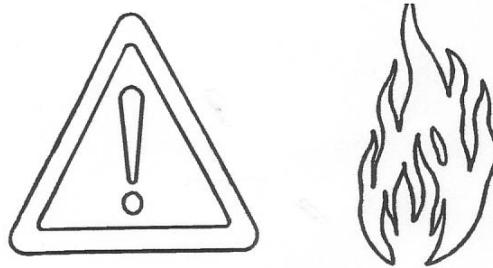


FIRE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

- Smoke detectors are recommended in each bedroom, hallway, and in the kitchen. Check them regularly.
- Mount or store a Fire Extinguisher (ABC type) in a central and accessible area. Make sure it functions well and that you know how to use it.
- DO NOT SMOKE IN BED or while sleepy.
- Keep space heaters/portable heaters away from furniture, cords, curtains, or other items that could ignite. Keep away from walkways where they can be bumped and cause burns.
- Make sure you have a screen in front of your fireplace.
- Fire response—make sure you and all caring for you know how to use 911 for emergencies.
- Notify the Fire Department of any disabled persons at your residence.

HAVE AN EVACUATION PLAN—

1. Establish specific exits routes for safe evacuation and make sure they are free of clutter.
2. Plan how to get someone who is ill out of an apartment that is not on the first floor.
- 3 . Know the location of all doors and windows.



EARTHQUAKE/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

****Refer to the front section of your phone book for complete earthquake information.**

Before:

1. Keep a 1-2 week supply of food/water on hand and consider any special dietary needs or formulas you may use. Place in a waterproof container.
2. Store a 1-2 week supply of medications and/or medical supplies that you will need (insulin, syringes, dressings).
3. Know the procedure to follow if you are using medical equipment that runs on electricity and there is a power failure (ventilators, IV pumps, feeding pumps).
4. Keep a flashlight and portable radio handy. These are helpful if the lights go out or for an emergency.
5. Check the condition and charge on batteries, especially for special medical equipment.
6. Block or lock wheels of items such as hospital beds, commodes, and refrigerators.
7. Persons who live alone should appoint an official “buddy” who will check on them after an earthquake or disaster.
8. Anchor tall furniture to the wall and remove heavy items from the top shelves.

During:

1. If inside, stay inside and take cover under a heavy desk or table away from windows or objects which may fall.
2. Drag a bed bound patient (or transfer them to a wheelchair) to move to a safe area.
3. Lock the wheels on a wheelchair after moving to a safe area.
4. If outside, stand away from trees, electrical lines, and buildings.
5. Follow your evacuation plan.

After:

1. Home infusion patients should go to the nearest emergency room if you run out of medications, solutions, or supplies and are unable to contact the Agency. We will try to contact patients as soon as possible after an earthquake.
2. If necessary, use an ambu bag for a ventilator-dependent patient until you can connect to a back-up system.
3. Turn off gas at the meter if you smell gas or hear hissing near gas appliances. **DO NOT LIGHT ANY MATCHES IF A GAS LEAK IS SUSPECTED.**
4. Assess for injuries and be prepared to administer First Aid.
5. Turn on a portable radio to listen for instructions from Public Safety Agencies.

FLOODS

(Flood warnings, alerts, or an actual flood.)

A. Precautions before the flood:

1. When a flood alert or warning is issued, store drinking water.
2. TURN OFF all unnecessary electrical appliances.
3. Do not touch any electrical appliance unless it is dry.
4. Open basement windows to equalize water pressure on the walls and foundation.
5. Move patient to upper floor or to other designated areas.
6. Move all essential equipment and supplies to safe areas.

B. After the flood:

1. Do not use any open flame devices until the building has been inspected for possible gas leaks.
2. Watch for live electrical wires.
3. Do not turn on any electrical appliance until it has been inspected.
4. Do not use any food supplies that have come in contact with floodwaters.
5. Provide emergency medical treatment required.

C. Flash floods:

1. Remember, flash floods can happen without warning.
2. When a flash flood warning is issued, take immediate action.
3. Protect patient and yourself to the best of your ability.

SNOW EMERGENCY

(Snow emergencies or winter storms)

A. Keep a one (1) to two (2) week supply of heating fuel, food, and water on hand in case of isolation at home.

B. Keep your car properly serviced, with snow tires and filled with gas.

C. Keep emergency supplies in the car:

1. Container of sand
2. Shovel
3. Windshield scraper
4. Tow chain or rope
5. Flares
6. Blanket
7. Flashlight

D. Notify organization of destination, schedule, and approximate time of arrival.

E. Dress appropriately—wear several layers of loose, lightweight warm clothing, mittens, and winter head gear to cover head and face.

F. Carry a cellular phone (if available).

G. Drive with all possible caution. If caught in a blizzard, seek refuge immediately. Keep car radio on for weather information.

H. If your car breaks down—turn flashers on or hang a cloth from the radio aerial; stay in your car. If car is stuck in snow or traffic jam and car is running, crack windows to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and keep exhaust pipe free of snow. If engine is not running, you do not need to crack windows.