

A HOME SAFETY CHECKUP

A self-guided fall prevention checkup.
How safe is your home?



A wellness publication prepared for members of Samaritan Health Plans

OUR MEMBERS. OUR NEIGHBORS.



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Did you know that most serious falls happen in or around your home and can be life-changing? Falls are often due to hazards that are easily overlooked. By identifying hazards and making a few changes in your home, you can help prevent falls.



What is a home safety checkup?

A home safety checkup is a list of questions to help you look for possible fall hazards. It is best to have someone with you when you complete this safety checkup. They may notice hazards that you do not. If any fall hazards are found try to get them fixed right away.

Doing this home safety checkup, and fixing any hazards you find, are steps toward preventing falls. **Once you have completed your home safety checkup, please fill out and return the last page of this booklet.** We would like to hear how it went!

Rooms and hallways:

Mark the box if you need to take action.

Do you have a clear path through your rooms and hallways? It is best to have a clear path through every room so you do not trip or fall.

Take action: Arrange and/or remove furniture or clutter to give you plenty of room to walk freely.

Are there throw rugs in your home? Throw rugs can cause you to trip or fall.

Take action: Remove them or use non-slip backing to secure the rug to the floor. You can find non-slip backing at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.

Are the lights bright enough throughout your home? During low light hours it can be hard to see trip hazards in your home.

Take action: Replace light bulbs or add lights to brighten your home. Consider adding night lights to rooms and hallways. You can find these at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.

Rooms and hallways *(cont.)*

Do you have a hard time getting in or out of your chairs or couches?
Higher chairs and couches are easier to sit down in and get up from.



Take action: Add a pillow to the seat to make it higher. You can find these at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.



Kitchen:

Are the items you use often on high shelves? Using a step stool and/or reaching too high is unsafe. If you do need to use a step stool, choose a sturdy one with a handrail.



Take action: Move the items you use often to lower shelves (about waist high).



Take action: Before climbing on any step stool, make sure it is fully opened and stable on a flat surface. Look for step stools with a handrail at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.



Bathroom:

Do you have grab bars near your shower, tub and toilet? Falls happen most often in the bathroom.



Take action: Adding grab bars near the shower, tub and toilet may prevent falls. Do not use towel racks as grab bars; they are not strong enough to support a person's weight.

Are your shower or tub floors slippery? Shower and tub floors need non-slip surfaces.



Take action: Add non-slip strips which can be found at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.

Do you get tired, dizzy or weak in the shower? It may be safer to sit while showering.



Take action: Using a bath or shower chair may help prevent a fall. If you think you need a bath or shower chair, talk with your health care provider. This may be covered by your health insurance. Otherwise bath or shower chairs can be found at your local home improvement stores, department stores or online.



Other:

Have you noticed any changes in your vision? Poor vision could lead to tripping or falling.

Take action: Have your eyes checked regularly. Vision problems can develop slowly over time, making routine eye exams important.

Do you find yourself rushing to the bathroom? Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.

Take action: If this happens often to you, talk with your health care provider.

Do you take prescription medications? Certain medications can increase your chance of falling due to side effects, such as dizziness, confusion or low blood pressure.

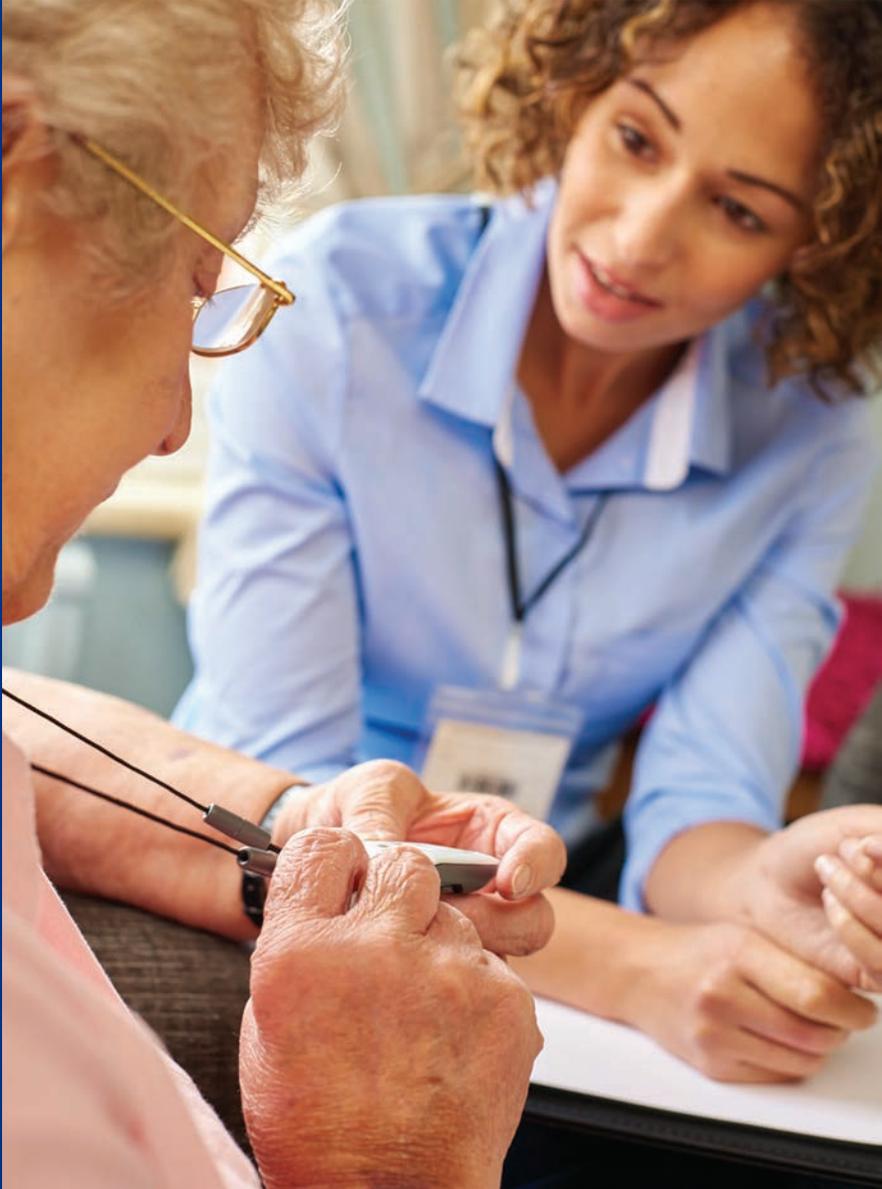
Take action: Talk with your health care provider or pharmacist to see if any of your medications have side effects that could increase your risk of falling.

Do you notice yourself holding onto furniture when walking around your home? The feeling of unsteadiness may mean you need more support. Using a cane or other assistive walking device may help you feel more stable.

Take action: If you think you need an assistive walking device, talk with your health care provider as this device may be covered by your health insurance.

Take action: Balance exercises can help improve your daily life and prevent falls. Talk with your health care provider about ways you can improve your muscle strength and balance.

Wearing a medical alert system makes it easier to call for help if you fall or have a medical emergency. To find out more about these devices look in the phone book, search online or call your local senior service center.



Helpful resources

We hope this booklet provided you with suggestions that will allow you to remain safe in your home for many years to come.

Below is a list of community resources that may be able to help with changes needed in your home.

Aging Wisely with Heartfelt Hands, Inc.

<http://agingwiselyoregon.org/>
1007 SW Abbey St., Newport
Phone: 541-265-8530

Providing Independence and Safety at Home for seniors.
Care providers from 2 hours a month to round-the-clock care, Housekeeping/yard work, Pharmacy pick-up and medication set-up, Home safety evaluation, and Medical equipment.

Cascades West Council of Governments – Senior Services

Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon

www.ocwcog.org

Linn and Benton Counties: 541-967-8630, Lincoln County: 541-336-2289,
Statewide: 855-673-2372

Hours: Mon.–Fri., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Resources include: Transportation, Housing, Food/Meals, Furniture, Adaptive Equipment/Special Needs, Life Line, Link-Up America.

Samaritan Lifeline Program

www.samhealth.org/find-a-location/l/lifeline

1020 SW 11th St., Albany

Phone: 541-812-4703

Hours: Mon.–Fri., 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Samaritan Lifeline Program provides fast, reliable access to medical assistance 24/7 in Benton, Linn and Lincoln counties. The number one medical alert service, Lifeline offers a variety of devices that are programmed to get designated or 911 help at the touch of a button.

Volunteer Caregivers

www.volunteercaregivers.org

930 Queen Ave. SW, Albany

Phone: 541-928-2173

Hours: Mon.–Fri., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Volunteer Caregivers is a volunteer-run program serving low-income seniors. Volunteers do minor home modifications for seniors, such as installing grab bars, building a wheelchair ramp or other durable medical equipment.

Elderly Assistance Services: Housekeeping, meal preparation, and transportation.

Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers

www.caregiversvic.org

501 NW 25th St., Corvallis

Phone: 541-757-0980

Hours: Mon.–Fri., 9 a.m. to Noon.

Volunteers provide services to frail elderly and disabled, lower income (upper income with donation if service cannot be hired) chore and handyman services.

Local Churches

Churches in your area may be able to help you. Look in the phone book or search online for their phone numbers.



Thank you for taking the time to complete your home safety checkup.

We would like to hear from you. Please fill out this page, cut along the dotted line, fold and mail it back to us.

Name: _____

DOB: _____

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By completing this home safety checkup, did you find any fall hazards in your home? Yes No

Did you or do you plan to make changes based on your home safety checkup? Yes No

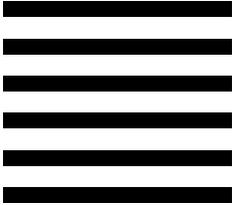
Did you find this booklet helpful? Yes No

(Please share any comments you have including any changes you made or plan to make).

Comments: _____



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