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accidents don't have to happen

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Safe at Home: Tips for the Over-65s

Over-65s

In the UK, people are living longer than ever before. In fact, by 2050, 1 in 4 of the UK population will be over 65.

This is great news!


Sadly however, the older we get, the more likely we are to have an accident. Luckily, there are plenty of steps we can take to keep safe in our homes.

With that in mind, we've put together a short guide to the most common accidents in the home.

For more detailed information, visit <https://www.rospa.com/older-people> or call our free **Lifeline** on **0808 801 0822**, and talk to someone about what you can do to stay safe!



Around 3 million people aged 65 or over end up in A&E every year following an accident



But this doesn't have to happen

Some ideas to help prevent...

Falls

Over half of all fatal accidents suffered by people over 65 are due to a fall. Even small falls can cause serious injuries, loss of mobility and independence. Thankfully, there's plenty we can do to stay on our feet!

Keep active – take steps to improve your strength and balance. Find out about exercises you can do to help this and any local classes.



Keep the stairs well lit and ensure damaged or worn carpet is either repaired or removed. Fit a handrail on both sides of the stairs.

Avoid leaving anything on the stairs that might trip you up.



Some ideas to help prevent...

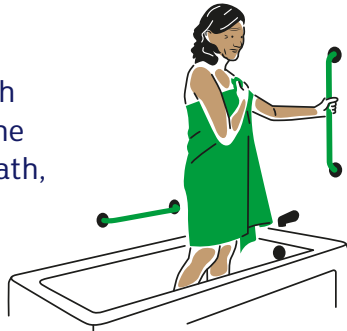
Falls

Loose or badly worn footwear can cause a nasty fall. Always choose well-fitting shoes and slippers.



Remove loose rugs, or use tape to stick down corners to stop them slipping around.

Consider fitting grab rails in high risk areas of the home such as the stairs, the kitchen, around the bath, the shower and the toilet.

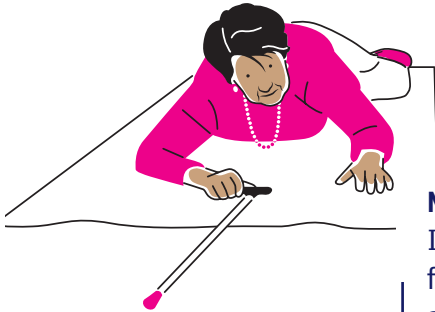


Pause for a moment before you stand up and be careful not to stretch too high or bend too low.
Listen to your body!

What to do if you're hurt

Don't panic - you will probably feel a little shocked and shaken after a fall, but try to stay calm. If you are hurt, it's important you rest and wait, rather than trying to get up straight away.

Try to get help: Use a pendant alarm if you have one or bang on the wall, call out for help, crawl towards your telephone.



Move to a soft surface:
If you have fallen on a hard floor, try to move or crawl to a carpeted area.

Keep warm: Try to reach for something to cover yourself with. Try to move out of draughts.



How to get up after a fall

If you're not hurt, roll onto your hands and knees and crawl to a stable piece of furniture such as a bed, stool or chair.



Keep your hands on the furniture, place one foot flat on the floor bending your knee in front of your tummy.

Lean forwards, push on your feet and hands until you bring the other foot beside the first. Turn and sit on the seat.



Don't forget to rest for a while before getting up. You should see your GP as soon as possible after your fall.

Some ideas to help prevent...

Fires

Fit a smoke alarm on every floor of your house. Choose one that's mains operated, or one with a 10 year battery and test it every week.



Make sure that food cooking on the hob isn't left unattended and that hobs are switched off after use.

Make sure all smoking materials are disposed of safely, and never smoke in bed!

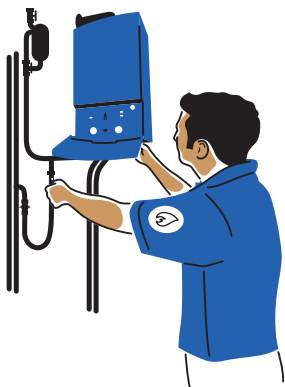


Remember: If you do discover a fire, get out, stay out and call the fire service out.

Some ideas to help prevent...

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide has no taste, smell or colour. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm and test it every week.



Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer to service your gas boiler annually. Don't forget other appliances such as wood/coal stoves need to be serviced annually too.

Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to flu. If you suspect you are being poisoned, get out and call the **Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 9999**.



Some ideas to help prevent...

Scalds & Burns

When running a bath, always run the cold water first and mix well to avoid hot spots. Fitting a thermostatic mixing valve will help to reduce the risk of a serious scald.



Try not to carry hot liquids further than necessary. You might have to re-arrange your tea and coffee-making area to make this easier.



Always fit a fire guard and never sit too close to the fire.



Some ideas to help prevent...

Hypothermia



Wear several thin layers of clothing. Natural fibres like wool are warmer than synthetic fabrics.

Remember to eat regular meals and have hot drinks during the day. Keep yourself moving to stay warm.



Contact your electricity and gas company if you're struggling to pay your bills – they may be able to help.



Checklist



- **Keep stairs** clear from clutter and well lit
- **Fit handrails** on stairs, in the kitchen and bathroom
- **Ensure shoes** and slippers fit properly
- **Tape down** loose rugs
- **Repair** or remove worn carpet
- **Mop up** spills immediately
- **Use** a non-slip bath mat
- **Have** your gas appliances checked and serviced regularly by a Gas Safe Engineer
- **Never use** a dishwasher or tumble drier when you're in bed or out of the house.
- **Don't** overload electrical sockets
- **Remove** trailing flexes

**For more tips
and in-depth
advice visit our
website:**

www.rospa.com/older-people



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Developed in partnership with



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