



Safety Checklist: How to Prevent Falls in Your Home

For older Americans especially, falls represent a serious health problem, causing thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations annually. In Montgomery County, falls are the leading cause of trauma/injury. Each year, one in three adults age 65 or older will experience a fall, risking traumatic injury or disability and increasing the likelihood of future falls.

Around half of all falls occur at home. These accidents are almost always preventable, and should not be seen as a normal consequence of aging. This checklist* will help you find and fix those hazards, keeping you and your loved ones safer every day.

Emergency Services

Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Hospital provides emergency care services for children and adults at two area locations.

Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Hospital Emergency Center

9250 Pinecroft Drive
The Woodlands, TX 77380
713.897.2525

Memorial Hermann 24 HR Emergency Care

9950 Woodlands Parkway
(Across from Walmart, near FM 2978)
The Woodlands, TX 77382
281.719.3333

Nurse Health Line

Not sure if you need to go to the doctor or the ER? Simply call the Nurse Health Line at 713.338.7979. It is open 24/7, staffed by RNs, and Spanish-speaking nurses are available too. This hot line is confidential, free to call and is for the residents of Harris County and surrounding areas including Montgomery County and Liberty County.

For life-threatening emergencies, please call 9-1-1. The Nurse Health Line is not designed to assist with life-threatening conditions or emergencies.

Check Your Floors

- It's important to have a clear path to walk through a room. If pieces of furniture are obstructing your way, ask a friend or family member to help you rearrange them.
- Throw rugs can be very slippery. Consider removing your rugs, or using double-sided tape or non-slip backing to secure them.
- Clutter often causes a fall. Look for books, shoes, boxes, blankets or any other objects that might land on the floor, and clear them away.
- Coil or tape your extension or appliance cords next to the wall so you can't trip over them.

Check Your Stairs and Steps

- Always pick up papers, shoes, or any other objects on your stairs so your path stays clear.
- Fix any broken or uneven steps.
- Make sure your path up and down the stairs is well lit. If you don't have an overhead light, have an electrician put one in. Ask friends to change your light bulbs right away if they burn out.

*Content sourced from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov (over)

- You should have two light switches for your stairs: one at the top, and another at the bottom. You can even get light switches that glow, making them easy to see.
- If your stairs are carpeted, make sure the carpet is firmly attached to each step. If your carpet is slippery, you can either remove it or attach non-slip rubber treads to your stairs.
- You should have firm and steady handrails on both sides of the stairs, running from top to bottom. If your handrails are getting shaky, have a friend help you fix them or install new ones.

Check Your Kitchen

- Move items in your cabinets so you don't have to reach for the high shelves. Keep things you use often on the lower shelves, at about waist level.
- If you must use a step stool to retrieve something from high up, get one with a bar to hold on to. Never use a chair as a step stool.

Check Your Bathrooms

- Tubs and shower floors can become very slippery. Make sure you have a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the tub or shower.
- It's best to have support when you get in and out of the tub or up from the toilet. Have a carpenter install grab bars so you'll avoid these common falls.

Check Your Bedroom

- Make sure you have easy access to bedroom lighting; place a lamp close to the bed side.
- The path from your bedroom to your bathroom should be well lit. Install a night light so you can see where you're walking. You can even buy a night light that turns on automatically after dark.

Other Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls

- Exercise regularly. Exercise makes you stronger and improves your balance and coordination.
- Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take, including over-the-counter medicines and herbal remedies. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Have your vision checked at least once a year by an eye doctor. Poor vision increases your risk of falling, as do conditions such as glaucoma or cataracts.
- Always get up slowly after you've been sitting or lying down.
- Wear sturdy shoes both inside and outside the house. Avoid going barefoot or wearing slippers, especially backless slippers.

For more information on emergency services, please visit [memorialhermann.org/locations/the-woodlands/](https://www.memorialhermann.org/locations/the-woodlands/)

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The Woodlands, TX 77380
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713.222.CARE