

Are Your Winchester Aging Parents Safe In Their Home?

Statistics tell us that most seniors want to “age in place”, staying in their home among familiar surroundings and in the midst of their friends and family. However, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, falls are the number one cause of death and injury to those over 65. In fact, more than 1/3 of all seniors – approximately 11 million people – will fall each year, resulting in a dramatic loss to their mobility and independence.

At FirstLight HomeCare of Southeast Virginia, we know the importance of keeping your loved ones safe in their home. When we come into a home to assess a client’s health needs, we also conduct an in-home safety evaluation. This is something that must be done on a continual basis as your loved ones needs may change over time.

With 6 out of 10 falls happening in the home, it’s important to “fall proof” your loved ones’ home both indoors and outdoors.

Tips For Senior Safety

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Are the rooms well lit or do lightbulbs need to be replaced? Do the light bulbs need to be a higher wattage? Do they have a lamp next to their bedside and a night light in the bathroom?
2. Are there loose rugs? Make sure all carpets are non-slip or well attached to the floor.
3. Are the rooms so cluttered that walking can be difficult? Remove all clutter from stairways and pathways. Be sure to consult your loved ones before throwing anything away. What you may see as trash they see as treasures.
4. Hire someone to remove snow or put salt on icy spots. Conversely in the summer, have someone mow and trim.
5. Is there a flashlight next to the bed in case the power goes out?
6. Are there handrails on both sides of the stairs and hallway?
7. Does the shower, tub and toilet have grab bars? Is there a chair or ledge in the shower in case they get tired and need to sit down? Do they need a raised toilet? Make sure the shower and bathtub have non-slip strips.
8. Make sure all often-used items are easily accessible. Don’t depend on step ladders to access hard-to-reach cabinets or places.
9. Is there a working smoke detector, fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector?
10. Are there electrical cords dangling on the floor or overloaded outlets?
11. If your loved ones live alone, do they need an emergency remote monitoring system?
12. Is the food in the refrigerator fresh? Is your loved one living on junk food and needs help cooking?

All of these are questions you should discuss with your parents so they feel they have a hand in the decisions that are made.

Understand that as people age, they fall for a variety of reasons. Maybe their muscles are getting weaker, have poor balance or difficulty walking. Maybe their blood pressure drops while standing or their vision is weakening. Or maybe they take medications that cause dizziness or confusion.

Whatever the reason, it's important to take important preventative measures to keep your loved ones as safe as possible.