

Hospice Basic Home Safety Instructions

According to the CDC, each year thousands of Americans fall at home. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook and easy to fix. These safety instructions are provided to assist you in identifying safety hazards in your home. We will give you suggestions on how to make corrections. You, however, 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.
- Exercise regularly as directed by your MD. Exercise makes you stronger and improves balance and coordination.
- Wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles.
- Have your vision checked at least once per year. Poor vision increases your risk of falling.
- 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.
- Check hot water temperatures to prevent burns. Set hot water at 100 degrees (F) or lower.
- Keep emergency phone numbers in large print near each phone.
- Consider wearing an alarm device that will bring help in case you fall and can't get up.

Oxygen Safety

- 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 3-pronged plugs.
- Make sure you properly assemble and test oxygen equipment before use.
- If using liquid oxygen, know how to safely fill the portable unit.
- 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.
- Have a plan to respond to an accident or emergency while using oxygen.
- Be sure the fire department knows there is oxygen in use at your home.

Medical Equipment Safety

Follow manufacturer/supplier instructions and refer to supplier for any questions.

Your Durable Medical Equipment Co. is responsible for the set-up, maintenance, emergency service, replacement, and back-up of equipment provided.

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 and 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 window-sills 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 crushing them and mixing them with dish soap, coffee grounds, kitty litter, or dirt and water to render useless.
- 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.
- Your prescription medications should be clearly labeled with your name (patient) the medication name, dosage, how frequently you are to take it, the route you are to take it, and an expiration date.
- If generic medications are used instead of the ordered trade name, both names should be on the medication.
- Always check that you have the correct drug, dosage, route and are taking it at the right time BEFORE you take it.

Infection Precautions, Hazardous Materials and Waste Handling Measures Safety

- 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.
- Washing your hands is the BEST method to prevent transmission of infection
- In general, one should wash hands BEFORE and AFTER activities including: preparing food, eating, using the restroom, and patient contact.
- You should use anti-bacterial soap and water for the best results. Wash all hand surfaces for at least 15-20 seconds. Rinse and dry your hands thoroughly.
- Alternatively, you may use an alcohol-based hand rub. It must contain 60% or more alcohol by volume to be effective. Rub all hand surfaces and wait until the alcohol evaporates before providing care.
- Handwashing before giving direct care protects the person who is susceptible to infection.
- Handwashing after direct care protects the caregiver.

The following are some precautions to use when caring for someone with an infection or open wound:

- Keep your hands away from your mouth and face.
- Use a tissue to cover your mouth / nose for coughs and sneezes and then wash your hands.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling any secretions or excretion, especially blood. Avoid direct skin contact with blood.
- Wear additional protective clothing such as a mask, goggles/glasses, gown/apron if blood or body fluids may splash and when handling hazardous materials/waste such as chemicals or cytotoxic agents.
- If participating in wound care/patient care procedures, create a work-space that is used only for that purpose. Keep the surface clean and clutter-free. Follow the specific directions given you concerning use of supplies and how to complete the procedure using sterile or clean technique.
- Surfaces visibly soiled with blood, fecal material or other body secretions require disinfection. A 1:10 concentration of household bleach is the best disinfectant because it is effective against organisms not killed by other household disinfectants.
- Use plastic bags to dispose of hazardous materials/waste, soiled tissues, dressings, bandages and soiled gloves. Close and secure the bag tightly when discarding. Place in a second bag, securing it tightly, also. 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 needle container immediately after use.
- Signs of infection include: redness, swelling, local discomfort, discolored or foul-smelling drainage, lack of healing and/or fever. Report these findings to your nurse and MD.
- At the end of physical care, WASH YOUR HANDS.

Disaster Plan

In the event of a disaster such as severe weather, flood, or tornado, Elevate Hospice has procedures in place to care for your needs.

If the telephones are working, do not hesitate to reach out to Elevate at our office number 480-800-4816. Assistance and/or reassurance will be available from our team.

IF the telephones are not working, DO NOT PANIC. Someone from Elevate Hospice will be checking on you within 24 hours. Elevate Hospice may utilize fire, police, or Red Cross services to assist in checking on patients.

If you need immediate assistance, go to the nearest hospital or Emergency Room.

If the electricity has gone off and you are on oxygen, switch to your portable oxygen tank as you have been instructed. DO NOT PANIC.

If you need to leave your home (due to damage from the disaster or for medical attention), please leave a note for Elevate Hospice containing date, time, and address of where you are going. Please continue to try and contact Elevate Hospice after safely reaching your destination.

Please be assured that Elevate Hospice will do everything possible to see that all of our patients' needs are met and cared for as expeditiously as possible.

Elevate Hospice & Palliative Care
480-800-4816