

Preventing Falls at Home

While recovering in the hospital you took added care to prevent falls in order to recover and heal safely. Once you are at home, it is important to continue to follow the fall prevention strategies you have begun.

If possible, prepare your home for recovery before you go to the hospital. If your trip to the hospital was sudden or unplanned, ask a family member or friend to prepare your home for your recovery before you get there.

To prepare your home, create a living area on one floor if possible, so you can avoid the stairs. Make sure your living area includes access to a telephone within reach at all times.

Tripping or falling can cause you injury. Even a minor trip can result in a return to the hospital. Remove throw rugs, electrical cords or wires and other tripping hazards from the area. Tack down any loose carpeting.

Pets that can get underfoot and cause you to fall should be kept out of the living area until you are more stable on your feet.

Add nightlights to the hallways, bedrooms and bathroom. Keep a flashlight near your bed in case you need to get up in the night. And wear your glasses.

Always wear tread socks or properly fitting shoes when walking, even for a quick trip to the restroom. Just like in the hospital, treads will grip bare floors to prevent slipping.

If you have stairs, make sure the handrail is secure.

When preparing your home, pay special attention to the bathroom. Install handrails near the toilet and in the shower. You can put a chair in the bathtub in case you need to rest while showering. Use a hand-held shower head.

And you may want to purchase a personal urinal, commode chair or toilet seat riser to make trips to the restroom easier.

As you recover, you may need help doing many of the routine activities of daily living, like cooking. Pre-cook several meals before your trip to the hospital and freeze them for later.

Stock your pantry ahead of time.

If you are restricted from bending or lifting, make sure your dishes, food and clothing are waist to shoulder level for easy access.

If you are generally in charge of yard work or have small projects around the house that need to be finished, do them before you go to the hospital.

And make sure your family members and friends are available to help you as you recover. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. If you live alone, ask a friend or family member to call you regularly to check in. They have your best interests at heart and want to make sure you recover safely.