

# Home Safety Checklist

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According to the Alzheimer's Association, 1 in 9 Americans aged 65 and older has Alzheimer's disease. There are approximately 48 million people worldwide with Alzheimer's or other dementias. More than 65 million caregivers, 29% of the U.S. adult population, provide an average of 20 hours of care per week; some provide care around the clock at home. Here are some tips for making your home dementia friendly.

- Display emergency numbers and your home address near all telephones. Put all cell phones and portable equipment in a safe place so they will not be easily lost.
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in or near the kitchen and all sleeping areas. Check their functioning and batteries frequently.
- Install secure locks on all outside doors and windows. Install alarms that notify you when a door or window is opened and hide a spare house key outside in case the person with Alzheimer's disease locks you out of the house.
- Avoid the use of extension cords if possible. Place lamps and appliances close to electrical outlets. Tack extension cords to the baseboards of a room to avoid tripping. Cover unused electrical outlets with childproof plugs.
- Check all rooms for adequate lighting. Place light switches at the top and the bottom of stairs. Add night-lights in dark areas.
- Remove throw rugs throughout the house. Use textured strips or nonskid wax on hardwood and tile floors to prevent slipping.
- Install childproof door latches on storage cabinets and drawers designated for breakable or dangerous items. Lock away all household cleaning products, matches, knives, scissors, blades, small appliances, and anything valuable.
- In the bedroom, use a monitoring device (such as those used for infants) to alert you to any sounds indicating a fall or other need for help. This also is an effective device for bathrooms.
- In the bathroom, place nonskid adhesive strips, decals, or mats in the tub and shower. If the bathroom is uncarpeted, consider placing these strips next to the tub, toilet, and sink. Use a raised toilet seat with handrails or install grab bars beside the toilet as well as in the tub/shower. Remove the lock from the bathroom door to prevent the person with Alzheimer's from being locked inside.
- Keep all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) in a locked cabinet. Use child-resistant caps as needed.

Keep in mind that it may not be necessary to make all of the suggested changes. This article covers a wide range of safety concerns that may arise, and some modifications may never be needed. It is important, however, to re-evaluate home safety periodically as behavior and abilities change.

## Source

Allen, K. (2019). Making Your Home Dementia Friendly. BrightFocus Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.brightfocus.org/alzheimers/article/making-your-home-dementia-friendly>