

CREATING A DEMENTIA SAFE HOME



Below are ideas to keep your loved one safe at home. As dementia progresses, common household products and setups can become dangerous. This list can be overwhelming at first glance, DON'T LET IT BE. It may not be necessary to make all the changes listed below, but it can get you thinking about changes you may want to make.

GENERAL HOME SAFETY

- Keep home address and emergency numbers (including poison control) visible at all times. Also keep a list of your loved one's doctors and updated medication list handy.
- Keep medications, vitamins, chemicals, laundry pods, bleach, needles, and any other items that can cause harm locked or stored safely out of the reach of your loved one.
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in or near kitchen and all bedrooms. Make sure to check them regularly to ensure proper functioning.
- Avoid use of throw rugs and extension cords as these are trip hazards.
- Avoid locks on interior doors (such as the bathroom) to avoid your loved one getting locked in.
- Consider putting dead bolts or latches above or below eye level on home exit doors to prevent wandering.
- Remove or securely store firearms.
- Remove candles, cigarettes, lighters, and matches from view to avoid possible fire.
- Keep home phone ringer volume low & on the shortest number of rings to avoid your loved one being victim of telephone scam or adding to confusion.
- To reduce fall risk, install handrails by all stairs and in bathrooms. Make sure furniture has arm rests. Avoid chairs with wheels.
- Give a spare home key to a trusted person or hide a spare key in case your loved one gets locked out.

- Consider applying parental control features on computers and televisions to avoid online scams and unintentional spending.
- Remove junk mail from home immediately to prevent likelihood of responding to solicitations and becoming a victim of scams.
- Monitor bank accounts regularly to catch any suspicious activity early. Consider limiting the amount of money your loved one has access to any at one time.
- Consider restricting access to credit cards and opting to give your loved one pre-paid credit cards or cash instead. Never give more access to money than you can afford to lose.
- Keep important documents and items out of reach and sight of your loved one to reduce chances of them getting lost. Pay special attention to wallets, purses, important mail, etc.
- Keep home well lit during waking hours. Consider nightlights along the hallway and in the bedrooms.
- Ensure your loved one has an identification bracelet or necklace on them at all times that lists their name, major medical conditions (i.e. dementia or memory problems) and emergency contact person and telephone number.
- Consider investing in a tracking device if your loved one is prone to wandering.

KITCHEN SAFETY

- Consider adding door latches to cabinets with cleaning supplies, chemicals, and sharp objects.
- Remove artificial or decorative fruits/vegetables as your loved one may attempt to eat them.
- Store any pet food out of sight or reach of your loved one as this can be mistaken for human food.
- Consider adding a drain trap in the kitchen sink to catch any inappropriate objects from going down the drain.
- Remove stove knobs to prevent cooking without supervision.
- Keep fire extinguisher nearby.

LAUNDRY ROOM

- Keep laundry/cleaning products out of reach and/or locked. Detergent products can be deadly if swallowed. People with dementia can mistake laundry pods for food.
- Ensure the dryer vent is cleaned regularly. Consider removing washer/dryer knobs if your loved one tries to do laundry without supervision.
- Ensure irons have automatic shut-off feature.

BATHROOM

- Set water temperature limits to avoid burning.
- Place non-skid stickers to bathroom floor/showers to reduce falls.
- Cover all electrical outlets. Remove electronic devices from bathroom to avoid shock.
- Insert grab bars by shower and toilet area.
- Remove inside bathroom lock to door to prevent getting locked in.
- Keep night light in the bathroom to help during night time bathroom breaks.
- Do not keep cleaning wipes (i.e. Lysol wipes) near the bathroom to avoid these being mistaken for body wipes.
- Invest in a shower transfer bench/shower chair as well as a handheld shower to make showering easier and minimize risk for falls.
- Consider foam rubber cover for the bathroom faucet to minimize risk of serious injury if there is a fall in the shower.

BEDROOM

- Try to prevent need for your loved one getting out of bed during the night by encouraging toilet use before bed and leaving water by bedside if they get thirsty at night.
- Consider use of sound monitoring device to detect any movement from your loved one in the middle of the night.
- Remove any portable heaters. Ensure stand alone fans are blade-less or objects cannot be placed in blades.
- Be cautious of any heated blankets, pads, pillows, etc. as these can lead to skin burns and fires.

GARAGE/BASEMENT

- Keep door to garages and basements locked if possible.
- Ensure your loved one does not have access to car keys.
- Keep paints, chemicals, fertilizers, and other potentially harmful products out of reach or stored in a locked cabinet.
- Ensure your loved one does not have access to power tools, lawn mowers, and other machinery that can cause injury.