

# Slip, Trip, and Fall Info for Older Adults

Annually, there are 1.6 million REPORTED falls among the population over the age of 65. There are potentially millions more unreported falls. For all reported falls, 76% of patients are treated and released the same day, 24% are treated and hospitalized, and 1% perished. The good news is that there are things you can learn and do to help reduce your risk. Slips, trips, and falls is a National problem; The Elder Fall Prevention Act has been passed by Congress for the development of effective public education, expansion of services and research on best practices.



## Top Household Accidents:

- Stairs, Ramps, Uneven Surfaces
- Beds, Pillows and Mattresses
- Furniture, Doors and Tables
- Bathroom Fixtures
- Pools and Bodies of Water
- Desks, Cabinets and Shelves
- Cans and Containers
- Clothing
- Ladders and Stools

## Understanding the risks:

- In 2011 (AZ), there were 124,155 ER visits, 17,824 hospitalizations, and 1033 fall related fatalities among older adults.
- The median hospital charge in 2011 for a fall injury (AZ) was \$39,098 (excluding EMS response, ER visits, nursing homes, home healthcare, or rehabilitation costs)
- Falls account for 25% of all hospital admissions and 40% of all nursing home admissions. 40% of those admitted never return to independent living, and 25% perish within a year. Many falls do not result in injury, yet 47% cannot get up without assistance.
- Getting help after an immobilizing fall improves the chance of survival by 80% and increases the likelihood of a return to independent living.
- For older Americans who fall and are unable to get up on their own, the period of time spent immobile greatly affects their health. Muscle cell breakdown starts to occur in 30 minutes of compression due to falling. Dehydration, pressure sores, hypothermia, and pneumonia are other complications that may result.

## YOU CAN HELP BY TAKING CHARGE!

- Make your home safer by reducing tripping hazards, adding grab bars around the toilet, shower, and tub areas, install anti-slip tape around areas that accumulate water or ice, improve the lighting around your home, and use the railings on staircases.
- Ask you DR to review ALL of your medications to help identify medicines that may cause dizziness and other harmful side effects.
- Exercise regularly. Weight bearing is often the best choice. Include stretching and breathing exercises Have your eyes checked annually and use the correct prescription.
- Get adequate Calcium and Vitamin D to help with your bone density.



## Why Older Adults Fall:

- 31% Accident/Environment
- 17% Gait/ Balance Disorder
- 15% Other Specified
- 13% Dizziness/Vertigo
- 10% Drop Attack
- 15% Other Reasons

## Information provided by:

FEMA (Dept. of Homeland Security)  
The United States Fire Administration  
LearnNotToFall.com  
Home Hazard Prevention, llc  
AZ Dept. of Health Services

# Home Fire Safety Tips for Older Adults

Roughly **3,500 Americans die each year** in fires and around 18,300 are injured. You can stop the fire before it starts! Use this fact sheet to learn how to prevent a fire in your home and know what you have to do if you do have a fire in your home. Some of the top dangers are: cooking related accidents, unsafe smoking practices, faulty/mismanaged heating equipment, arson, electrical, and appliances.

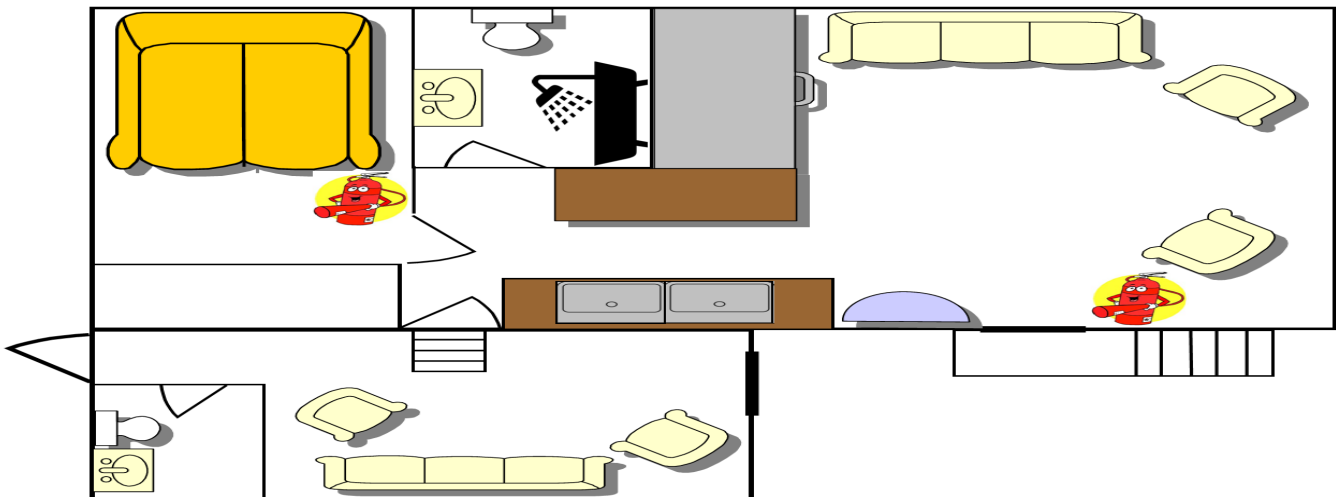
## Stop the fire *before* it starts:

- Remember to never leave food unattended and don't wear loose clothing, like shirts with big sleeves, when cooking.
- Never use the stove or oven to heat your home.
- Double-check the kitchen to be sure the oven and all appliances are turned off before going to bed or leaving your home, even if only for a minute.
- Never smoke in bed or on any flammable fabrics or materials.
- Replace mattresses made prior to the 2007 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard.
- Keep combustible materials, like drapes and clothing, at least 3 feet away from your heater, as they can catch fire.
- Never overload circuits, outlets, or extension cords.



## Be prepared for a fire:

- A Dual Sensor Smoke Alarm greatly reduces your chances of dying in a fire. Smoke alarms can either be battery operated and/or plugged into your homes' electrical grid.
- Prepare an escape plan and practice it twice a year. Make sure everyone knows at least 2 escape routes from your home.
- Have a small fire extinguisher at each side and on each level of your home. This will allow you to quickly extinguish small fires while keeping you safe.
- We carry small fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, we can get them to you today!



## Understanding the risks:

- In 2010, older adults (ages 65+) represented 13% of the total US population, but suffered 35% of all fire related fatalities. That's over 900 older adults annually!
- Older Americans have many risk factors for a number of reasons: They may be less able to take quick actions in an emergency, they may be on medication that affects their ability to make quick decisions, or they may live alone and accidents may occur when others are not around to help.
- **FREE Information online:** <http://homehazardprevention.com>

