



S.O.S.

SENIOR OUTREACH SERVICES

KEEPING SAFE AT HOME

The risk of falls is one of the greatest dangers for older adults, and can result in injury and even death. Individuals with dementia must be given special consideration. There are many steps that can be taken ahead of time to ensure greater safety and security in the home. Your S.O.S. Care Manager can help you evaluate your home environment for any risks, as well as make recommendations for services and equipment that can provide additional safety.

What to look for in your home environment

Beware of items such as loose throw rugs and electrical cords that can pose a hazard, as well as worn carpets and poorly lit areas. Adequate lighting is crucial for individuals whose eyesight may be weak. Watch out for glare that may be reflected from smooth or shiny surfaces. Crowded or cluttered apartments can also make navigation more difficult for someone who is unsteady on their feet. Make sure that an emergency contact list is posted in a prominent place. This document should be in clear, large font and should include names of important contacts as well as addresses and nearest cross streets.

If an individual has dementia, it will be important to secure items with sharp edges such as knives, and poisonous items such as cleaning supplies. It may also be necessary to remove knobs from the stove and oven. Are there firearms in the home? If so they need to be secured or removed. An I.D. bracelet is also a good idea for individuals with memory loss.

Equipment

There are many pieces of relatively inexpensive and easily acquired equipment that can help to make a home safer. The following are just a few:

- Nightlights – in every room, especially important in the bedroom and bathroom.
- Grab bars – should be installed at strategic locations, especially in the bathroom.
- Peep holes – if your front door does not have one – get one, and use it!
- Emergency response units – for individuals who live alone and are homebound, a wide variety of services provide this convenience. It can be life-saving in case of a fall. These are usually run through the telephone system and can be accessed by a button worn around the neck or wrist.
- Hand held showers, bath benches and bath mats – all essential for bathing.
- Cordless telephone – can be carried around to avoid having to move quickly to answer when it rings. Also avoid cords that can be tripped on. Look for phones with large number dials. In case of a power failure, it is also good to have one cord phone that will continue to work.

Your S.O.S. Care Manager can assist you with determining what types of equipment will be most useful to you and can help you order it. For more information, please visit www.homemods.org and www.caring.com.

This information is brought to you by Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, the community's leading agency in providing care for the elderly. To learn more call: **(323) 932-0316** or visit www.jfsla.org/sos.