

# FALL PREVENTION

## CHECKLIST AND RESOURCE GUIDE

### DON'T LET A FALL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Falls are the leading reason seniors lose their independence. However, falls are preventable through exercise, medication management, eye exams, and home modifications. Use this guide to assess your risk, evaluate your home, and locate resources to make your home safer. Prevent a fall and maintain your independence.



**MEALS on WHEELS**  
DIABLO REGION

# HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

The following checklist will help you evaluate how well-equipped your home is to prevent falls and maintain your independence. Each question you answer “No” to presents an opportunity for improvement to reduce your risk of falling. Contact one of the resources listed on the back of this brochure for assistance in addressing the hazards you have identified.

STAIRS 	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DOESN'T APPLY
<b>1. Are sturdy handrails provided on both sides?</b> <i>Railings on both sides provide confidence whether going up or down.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Are the stairs in good repair and free of clutter?</b> <i>Carpeting and obstructions will contribute to a fall.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Are the steps in good condition and clearly marked?</b> <i>Vision and depth perception diminish with age. Many falls occur as a result of missing the last step. Contrasting colors and non-slip surfaces can help prevent falls.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Is lighting adequate with switches at both the top and bottom?</b> <i>Lighting is important everywhere and especially on stairs.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEDROOM 	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DOESN'T APPLY
<b>1. Is the pathway between the bed and bathroom clear of obstructions and clutter?</b> <i>The second most common location for a fall in the home is next to your bed.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Is your path to the bathroom lighted?</b> <i>Automatic or continuous lighting is the best. Nightlights will do the trick.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Do you have a phone that is easily reachable from bed?</b> <i>Many falls occur when we rush to answer the phone.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Is it easy for you to get in and out of bed?</b> <i>Adjusting the mattress height or installing a bedside pole may help.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Do you keep a flashlight at your bedside?</b> <i>Flashlights are helpful in the event of a power outage.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATHROOM 	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	DOESN'T APPLY
<b>1. Are grab bars installed in the bathing area?</b> <i>Grab bars can help you maintain your independence and reduce falls in the bathing area. They should be installed through the wall surface and secured to the wood studs.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Can you get on and off the toilet easily without assistance?</b> <i>If not, commode rails or grab bars can help.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Do you have nightlights?</b> <i>Night-time trips to the bathroom are the most dangerous. Proper lighting can help.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Does the tub/shower floor have non-slip strips or a bath mat?</b> <i>It is best if the mat or strips are secured to the floor with adhesive.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Do you have a shower chair (bath bench) or hand-held shower?</b> <i>Sitting while bathing is safer and easier, especially when using a hand-held shower.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# KITCHEN



YES

NO

DON'T  
KNOW

DOESN'T  
APPLY

1. Can you easily reach the items that you use frequently?

*Reaching too far can cause a loss of balance. Have someone help you move items so that you never have to climb to reach.*





2. Do your kitchen chairs have sturdy arms and no wheels?

*It is much safer and easier to get in and out of a stable chair.*





3. Have you placed a completed "Vial of Life" in your refrigerator?

*Doing so will ensure that emergency responders will have access to your critical health information. Call Meals on Wheels Diablo Region for more information, 925.937.8311.*





# GENERAL



YES

NO

DON'T  
KNOW

DOESN'T  
APPLY

1. Have all throw rugs been removed?

*Small rugs create a hazard for tripping and slipping. This hazard far outweighs the benefits of throw rugs.*





2. Are all pathways clear of clutter and cords?

*Wires can be a trip hazard. Run them behind furniture so that they are out of your foot path.*





3. Are your house numbers visible both day and night?

*Making them so will enable emergency responders to locate you promptly.*





4. Are smoke detectors installed in every bedroom, in the adjacent hallway, and on every floor?

*Multiple detectors greatly increase the speed and reliability of detection. Every second counts. Check batteries every six months.*





5. Are smoke detectors fewer than 10 years old?

*Smoke detectors are only designed to last 10 years even if they still work to the touch. The fire department has smoke detectors available.*





6. Do you have a working carbon monoxide detector?

*Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, and deadly.*





7. Do your pets' collars have bells on them?

*Hearing your pet may help you avoid tripping over them.*





8. Do you keep your pets' food, water, and bedding away from footpaths?

*Doing so will prevent tripping over them or slipping on spills.*





9. Do you keep a cordless phone with you at all times?

*Doing so will prevent you from running to answer the phone.*





10. Do you wear non-slip footwear around the house?

*Thin-soled shoes and slippers with non-slip bottoms are best to prevent falls. Avoid socks and bare feet.*





11. Do you have an emergency alert system (e.g., pendant)?

*An emergency alert system will enable you to get help even if you are unable to speak.*





12. Is the water heater set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less?

*Doing so will reduce the likelihood of scalding.*





13. Do you have a fire extinguisher on each level of your home, and do you know how to use it?

*Ready access to an extinguisher can prevent a minor fire from becoming a major one.*





14. Do all electrical outlets have two or fewer appliances plugged in at any time?

*Overloading of electrical outlets is the most common cause of household fires.*





15. Do large rugs have non-slip grips beneath them?

*The corners of area rugs are often where slips occur.*



# SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following questions for an indication of your relative risk of falling.

Check “yes” or “no” box for each question.

	YES	NO
1. Have you ever fallen? <i>Individuals who have fallen are more likely to fall again.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Has your fear of falling impacted your daily activities? <i>The fear of falling often initiates a downward spiral of health and loss of independence.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you taking four or more medications each day? <i>Have ALL of your medications reviewed by your doctor. Sometimes medications interact negatively, causing increased dizziness and decreased muscle strength.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you have difficulty rising from a chair without using your arms? <i>Loss of leg strength reduces your ability to recover from a near fall.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Has it been more than one year since your last eye exam? <i>A proper eyeglass prescription is essential to minimizing your fall risk.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do you occasionally support yourself by grabbing onto furniture and fixtures? <i>Doing so is an indicator of reduced stability (a risk for falling).</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are you over the age of sixty-five? <i>Age is a predictor but need not be a definitive measure of the risk of falling.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you exercise fewer than three times per week? <i>Physical activity maintains leg strength and greatly reduces the risk of falling. ALWAYS speak to your doctor before beginning an exercise program.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are you reluctant to ask for assistance with challenging activities? <i>Asking for help is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOTE: Answering “Yes” to two or more of these questions means that you are at a significant risk of falling.	<b>ADD YES COLUMN ANSWERS AND ENTER TOTAL IN BOX</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# RESOURCES

The organizations listed below perform home safety assessments and practical home safety modifications (e.g. installation of grab bars, smoke detectors, and stair railings) in Contra Costa County.

	PHONE	WEBSITE	ASSESSMENTS	MODIFICATIONS	NO COST/SLIDING SCALE
Meals on Wheels Diablo Region	925-937-8311	<a href="http://www.mowdiabloregion.org">www.mowdiabloregion.org</a>	✓	✓	✓
Home Safety Services	1-888-388-3811	<a href="http://www.homesafety.net">www.homesafety.net</a>	✓	✓	
Independent Living Resources	925-363-7293	<a href="http://www.ilrsc.org">www.ilrsc.org</a>	✓		✓
Safe at Home Grab Bars	925-360-1909	<a href="http://www.safeathomegrabbars.com">www.safeathomegrabbars.com</a>	✓	✓	