

home

YOUR AT-HOME CARE GUIDE

caregiver overview

Northern Illinois Hospice is first in supporting you with the resources you need to ensure the best care. This is one in our series of tip sheets on how to improve safety and well-being in the home environment.

General Guidelines

- Do not use throw rugs, and avoid areas with highly polished floors
- Keep paths free of obstacles, such as cords
- Improve lighting in home; consider brighter light bulbs
- Wear supportive shoes (i.e. sneakers) and avoid wearing just socks or loose slippers
- Arrange furniture to minimize obstacles
- Use a “reacher” device to pick up objects from the floor, or sit down in a chair to pick them up without having to bend forward as much
- Be aware of any side effects from medications, such as dizziness
- If alone, consider using a personal emergency response system, such as Lifeline
- Keep a phone nearby at all times

Stairs

- Light stairs near the top and bottom, including nightlights
- Keep stair treads in good repair
- Securely fasten handrails on both sides of stairwell extending the full length of the stairs
- Keep stairs clear of objects

Bathroom

- Use a rubber shower mat
- Install grab bars for tub/shower and commode
- Ensure adequate lighting to bathroom, including a nightlight
- Set water heater temperature to 110° F to prevent burns



First in *caring* for life's final months

Kitchen

- Store objects within reach or use a sturdy step stool, not a chair

Bedroom

- Keep nightlight, flashlight and other adequate lighting within easy reach
- Keep assistive devices like walkers within reach of bed
- Rise slowly from lying or sitting position and sit down if you feel dizzy
- Get dressed while seated

Walking Tips

- Remember to use assistive device (canes, walkers, etc.)
- When maneuvering around furniture, take small steps
- Use a tray or bag to carry objects if using a walker
- Only reach for objects one arm's length around your sides or front

Transferring Tips

- Get up slowly after sitting or lying down
- Use small steps to approach surface to sit (bed/chair/toilet)
- Reach back to chair seat or armrests with both hands; do not sit unless the surface is located with hands and felt on the back of legs, then lower gently
- When rising, push up from chair with hands, come to stand, then put hands on walker or cane
- Know the safety precautions for wheelchair use (e.g. locking brakes before attempting to move in or out of wheelchair, moving leg rests out of the way when transferring in/out of wheelchair); use "reacher" device to pick up anything off the floor while in the wheelchair

Other Safety and Emergency Tips

- Install smoke alarms that emit both audio and visual warnings
- Keep emergency numbers by the phone including 911
- Do not smoke around oxygen tanks
- Know instructions for use of back-up oxygen tank
- Inform local police/fire department that a homebound/wheelchair-using person resides in dwelling