

## **SAFETY BEGINS AT HOME**

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Each year 150,000 Americans die from injuries and another 30 million are hurt seriously enough to go to the emergency room. Many of these injuries could have been prevented. Make time to learn what you can do to protect yourself and the ones you love.

- Assess your home for potential hazards such as poor lighting and uneven surfaces to prevent falls. Use the maximum wattage bulb that the fixture will safely accommodate. Avoid glare by using soft white bulbs. Keep a flashlight by the bedside to light the way at night. Install night lights that automatically turn on as rooms darken.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Replace batteries twice a year, when time changes. It is best not to use a space heater in the bedroom or bathroom because of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning risks.
- Make sure all electrical outlets are covered and inaccessible to children. Don't run electrical cords under furniture and rugs. Keep them away from high traffic areas. Store and use all electrical appliances, such as shavers and hair dryers, safely away from the sink. Do not use portable electric space heaters in the bathroom. Unplug small appliances when not in use.
- Check your hot water heater periodically and adjust the thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to avoid burns. Consider installing an anti-scald device, pressure balancer, or temperature limiter. This device quickly reduces the flow of water to a trickle when hot tap water reaches an unsafe temperature.
- Get rid of clutter and keep walkways clear. Don't leave things scattered about on countertops and in work areas. Never use stairs for temporary storage or for displaying decorative items.
- Avoid trips and falls. Repair loose, broken and missing or worn steps. Make sure carpeting on steps is securely fastened and free of holes and frayed edges. Use a non-slip mat or adhesive safety strips inside the bathtub and shower. Use non-slip rugs and mats to catch drips while bathing. Remove throw rugs. If not possible to remove them, keep rugs out of high traffic areas and make certain rugs have a non-skid backing.
- Supervise young children whenever they are in the bathroom, as well as the kitchen or near a cooking surface.
- Keep cleaning supplies and medicines in original containers and store in locked cabinets out of the reach of children.
- Program emergency numbers, such as the Poison Control Hotline (1-800-222-1222), into your phone. Place emergency numbers next to every phone in your home.
- Establish a plan for how you would evacuate from your home in the event of an emergency.

Remember! Safety Begins at Home!

*For more tips on ways to keep your home healthy and safe contact the Oconee County Extension Office at 706.769.3946 or stop by our office at 23 Water Street, behind the Oconee County Courthouse. You can also download a home safety checklist from the UGA Cooperative*

*Extension website ([www.gafamilies.com](http://www.gafamilies.com)).*