KEEPING YOUR BRAIN IN MIND...

HEADS UP! SENIORS

Use this checklist from the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey, to identify potential improvements for your home and your life.

MY HOME

STAIRWAYS, HALLWAYS AND ENTRANCES
☐ All stairs and stair coverings are in good repair.
☐ Handrails are sturdy and run the full length of stairs.
☐ All stairways are well lit. I can clearly see the outline of each step going down.
☐ Hallways and entrances are well lit indoors and out.
☐ Stairways, hallways and entrances are kept clear and free of clutter.
☐ Sidewalks and walkways are level and free of cracks or holes.
☐ Pathways and steps are free of ice, snow, newspapers and leaves.

BEDROOM
☐ I keep a working flashlight and telephone by the bed.
☐ There is a light switch or lamp within reach of the bed.
☐ The bed is right at the proper height to allow easy access.

BATHROOMS
☐ Tubs and showers have a non-skid mat, decals, abrasive strips and/or non-slip surface.
☐ Sturdy grab bars or handrails are installed by the toilet, and in tubs and showers.
☐ Tub seat, hand-held shower and/or raised toilet seat with arms are used if needed.
☐ Bathroom rugs have non-slip backing. Bathroom floors have a non-slip surface.

LIVING AREAS
☐ Papers, magazines, books, shoes and boxes are kept off the floor.
☐ I can turn on the light in each room without having to walk through dark areas.
☐ Nightlights are used, especially between the bed and bathroom.
☐ Cords and wires are not stretched across pathways or under rugs.
☐ Carpet, tile and floorboards lie flat and are in good repair.
☐ I do not use loose rugs or unsecured mats in or around my home.
☐ Area rugs have non-slip backing or are secured with double-sided tape on all sides.
☐ Furniture is arranged to prevent tripping and pathways are kept clear.
☐ Work and storage areas are organized so they are within easy reach.
☐ There is always a phone within easy reach. Emergency numbers are posted.
☐ I always use a sturdy stepstool or ladder to reach high places - never a chair.
☐ I never climb a stepstool or ladder when I am alone.
☐ Spills are wiped up immediately to prevent slipping.
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**GETTING AROUND**

- I wear supportive, low-heeled, non-slip shoes. Even at home I keep my shoes on to avoid slipping in my socks or stockings.
- In wet weather, I wear non-slip boots or rubbers and avoid slippery surfaces.
- I pay attention to floors in public buildings, especially if they are waxed or wet.
- I am a defensive walker, watching for drivers, bicyclists and rollerbladers.
- When getting out of a vehicle, I take my time, especially if the ground is uneven.
- If recommended by my health care provider, I use my cane, walking stick or walker.
- I leave plenty of time to get to my destination - I never rush.
- I plan ahead so that I do not go out during rush hour, darkness or bad weather.

**HEALTH**

- My vision and hearing have been checked within the past year.
- I take my reading glasses off while I am not reading.
- I have reviewed my medications with my doctor and have talked about the possible side effects or interactions.
- My medications are clearly labeled and I take them only as prescribed. I eat nutritious, balanced meals with adequate calcium and vitamin D.
- To maintain strength and balance, I exercise regularly (with doctors approval).
- To avoid negative effects on my judgement, I moderate my alcohol consumption.
- I engage in activities that stimulate my mind and keep my brain active.

**IN GENERAL**

- I have an answering machine or portable phone - I do not rush to answer the phone.
- I have arranged for daily contact with a friend or family member. I ask for assistance with heavy work.
- I keep an eye out for dangers or hazards.
- I am careful not to get up too quickly, especially after lying down, resting or eating. I wear sunglasses on sunny days to cut down on the glare and protect my eyes.
- I discourage my pets from sleeping in pathways or underfoot.
- Visiting children are taught to pick toys up off the floor, the stairs or in the hallway.

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