

Basic Home Safety

* GENERAL HOME SAFETY *

- Stairways should have safe and sturdy railings or banisters.
- Keep stairways, halls and exits free of clutter, such as shoes, tools, toys, etc....
- Stair surfaces should be non-slip.
- Throw rugs should have non-slip backing and avoided in traffic areas.
- Stairways and halls should be well lit.
- Waxed and highly polished floors can be a trip hazard.
- Use night-lights in bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.
- Do not block doorways with furniture.
- Storage places for often-used items should be kept in easy reach.
- Emergency phone numbers should be placed by the telephone.
- Wipe up spilled liquids, grease, or dropped food particles right away.
- Store all poison and dangerous chemicals, such as cleaning agents, separate from food items and out of reach of children. All chemicals should be clearly labeled.
- Wear shoes or slippers when up and about, rather than going barefoot.
- If shoes have laces, they should be well tied to prevent tripping.
- Be alert to unsafe conditions. Avoid hurrying.
- To report concerns about patient safety and quality of care to management call (423) 477-9806.
- Concerns about patient safety and quality may also be reported to the Joint Commission at (877) 223-6866 without retaliatory action from Ballad Health Medical Equipment.

* BATHROOM SAFETY *

- Do not use electrical appliances in the bathtub or shower.
- Use rubber mats or non-slip strips on the floor of the bathtub or shower.
- Do not use soap-holder handles or towel racks as a grab bar for support when getting in or out of the tub.
- Avoid use of oil in the bath -- this can make the tub slippery.
- Make sure feet are dry before stepping onto tile-type floors.
- Make sure the water temperature is not too hot before getting into the tub or shower.
- Medicines should be clearly labeled. Throw away prescription medications when the illness is over or if the date on the container is old.

* PATIENT CARE SAFETY *

- Bedrails should be raised and securely fastened when the patient is in bed.
- Ensure that the patient is safely positioned while seated in a chair. Use a safety belt if necessary.
- If restraints are used, make sure that (1) they do not interfere with circulation, (2) are properly applied, (3) do not cause irritation to the skin, and (4) are comfortable.
- Make sure wheelchair brakes are locked before getting in or out. Move footrest out of the way before trying to stand. Do not stand on footrests. Place feet firmly on the floor before attempting to stand.
- Clear the room of extra equipment that might block pathway, especially at night.
- Keep electric heating pads at low-medium heat. Place the pad on or over the patient, rather than placing the patient on the pad.

* ELECTRICAL SAFETY *

- Plugs and sockets should fit firmly and require some force to insert and remove.
- If children are present in the home, all unused outlets should have childproof caps inserted.
- Unplug any plugs or outlets that form a connection that is warm to the touch. Do not use them until they have been repaired or replaced.
- Always grasp the plug to remove it from the outlet. NEVER pull on the cord.
- All electrical devices should be properly grounded unless they are "double insulated".
- "Cheaters", which convert three-prong plugs into two-prong plugs, should not be used.
- Avoid using extension cords and never overload them.
- Check cords for fraying, bare wires, or other defects, especially at the point where the cord attaches to the equipment.
- Keep cords away from oil, grease, or any material that causes deterioration.
- Keep cords out of the way of traffic to prevent a trip hazard.
- Oxygen increases the flammability of other materials. Take precaution to prevent sparks in oxygen therapy areas.
- Never touch an electrical appliance and plumbing at the same time.

- Never run a cord across the sink or across a wet floor.
- Make sure circuits are not overloaded.
- Disconnect equipment that: sparks, stalls, blows a fuse, or gives the slightest shock.
- Report equipment malfunctions to Ballad Health Medical Equipment.
- Repairs to wiring and circuits should be done by a qualified electrician only.

*** FIRE SAFETY ***

- Never cover a bright light with material to try to dim the light.
 - Lighted matches and cigarettes should be put out completely before throwing them away.
 - Do not smoke in bed. If a patient must smoke in bed, never leave them unattended.
 - Do not use shallow ashtrays.
 - Stoves should not be by curtain windows.
 - Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
 - Make sure long sleeves and loose parts of clothing are out of the way of the fire, when cooking.
 - When heaters are in use, make sure that the room is well ventilated.
 - Smoke detectors should be placed on each level of the home.

*** IN CASE OF ELECTRICAL FIRE ***

- Get everyone out of the area.
- Report the fire.
- If the fire is small, such as a piece of equipment:
 - Pull the plug, turn off the switch, or trip the circuit breaker.
 - Extinguish the fire with a "CLASS C" fire extinguisher (made specifically to put out electrical fires).
- If the fire is large or threatens flammable materials, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIGHT THE FIRE YOURSELF.
- NEVER use water on an electrical fire.

*** IN CASE OF ELECTRICAL SHOCK ***

1. DO NOT TOUCH the person shocked. If you touch the victim with your hands, you could be shocked too.
2. Turn off the power or pull the plug to the machine, appliance, or equipment.
3. If you are unable to cut off the power, call the electric company.

Call your local emergency services to treat the victim.