



Holiday Safety Checklist

A little planning and preparation for older loved ones will make their visit safe and happy



The holiday season is fast approaching, and with it comes the annual joy of family gatherings. Generations come together to celebrate and reunite and we create memories that last a lifetime. If your guest list includes an older loved one who lives in a residential care facility, it's important to make sure their visit will be safe and happy for everyone.

No matter how long the visit, a little planning and preparation can reduce the potential of accidents or other problems that could have disastrous consequences. Here are some things to consider.

Accessibility

- Are there stairs leading into your home?
- Can your guest safely climb a few steps?
- Are there handrails?
- Are the doors and hallways wheelchair accessible?

Clear the Way

To help eliminate falls:

- Remove all throw rugs and secure edges of area rugs.
- Create clear, wide paths around furniture.
- Keep rooms and hallways free of clutter.
- Secure or remove extension cords or other electrical cords.

Rest Room

- Do you have a first floor rest room?
- Is it wheelchair or walker accessible?
- If there is no bathroom, or if it is inaccessible, is there a private area where you can set a commode?

Dietary Needs

- Are there any diet restrictions? Be mindful of salt, sugar, fat.
- Adapt favorite recipes to fit within dietary restrictions.
- Serve a few dishes that can be enjoyed by everyone.
- Is there a mealtime schedule that must be observed? Some conditions, like diabetes, require meals at regular intervals.

Memory Concerns

- If your holiday guest has Alzheimer's or a related dementia, there are some special precautions you can take to help ensure their safety:
- Make sure exterior doors are securely closed and locked to prevent wandering.
- Keep the noise level to a minimum, lower voices.
- Serve foods that are easy to eat and manage.
- Avoid having too many decorations, especially items that your loved one may mistake for food.
- Plan activities that include sharing memories and stories, like looking through old family photos or movies.

Naps

- Does your loved one's schedule include a nap or rest time?
- Is there a quiet place to lie down and rest?

Medication Schedule

- Remind your loved one to bring all medications that will be needed.
- Take medicine on time.

It's a good idea to speak with your loved one's care team about your upcoming plans and ask for their assistance in planning the visit. They can help you to plan a schedule that will work with both you and your loved one's needs and allow you to make any advance preparations necessary.

It will also give the care team time to prepare your guest for their visit, like practicing stairs or walking a certain distance. Your loved one wants their visit to be successful just as much as you do. With a little effort, your holiday will be safe and enjoyable for everyone.

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