

# LET'S PREVENT FALLS

**N**early 2 million American elders are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year for injuries resulting from falls. Approximately 5,000 die; for many people, a fall marks the beginning of a long, gradual decline into frailty. About

half of all serious falls happen at home and can be prevented if your home (or your loved one's home) is made safe. Here are some useful hints for increasing home safety and preventing falls. Please clip this article to use as a checklist as you make your home a safer place to live.

## STAIRS

- Always keep objects off stairs.
- Fix loose or uneven steps; repair/replace loose or torn carpet.
- Install working overhead lights at top and bottom of staircase. Make sure bulbs are not burned out.
- Install solid (not loose or broken) handrails on both sides of stairway.
- Paint contrasting color on top edge of all steps.

## BATHROOMS

- Place or install non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on floor of shower or tub.
- Install grab bars in shower, inside tub and next to the toilet.

## KITCHEN

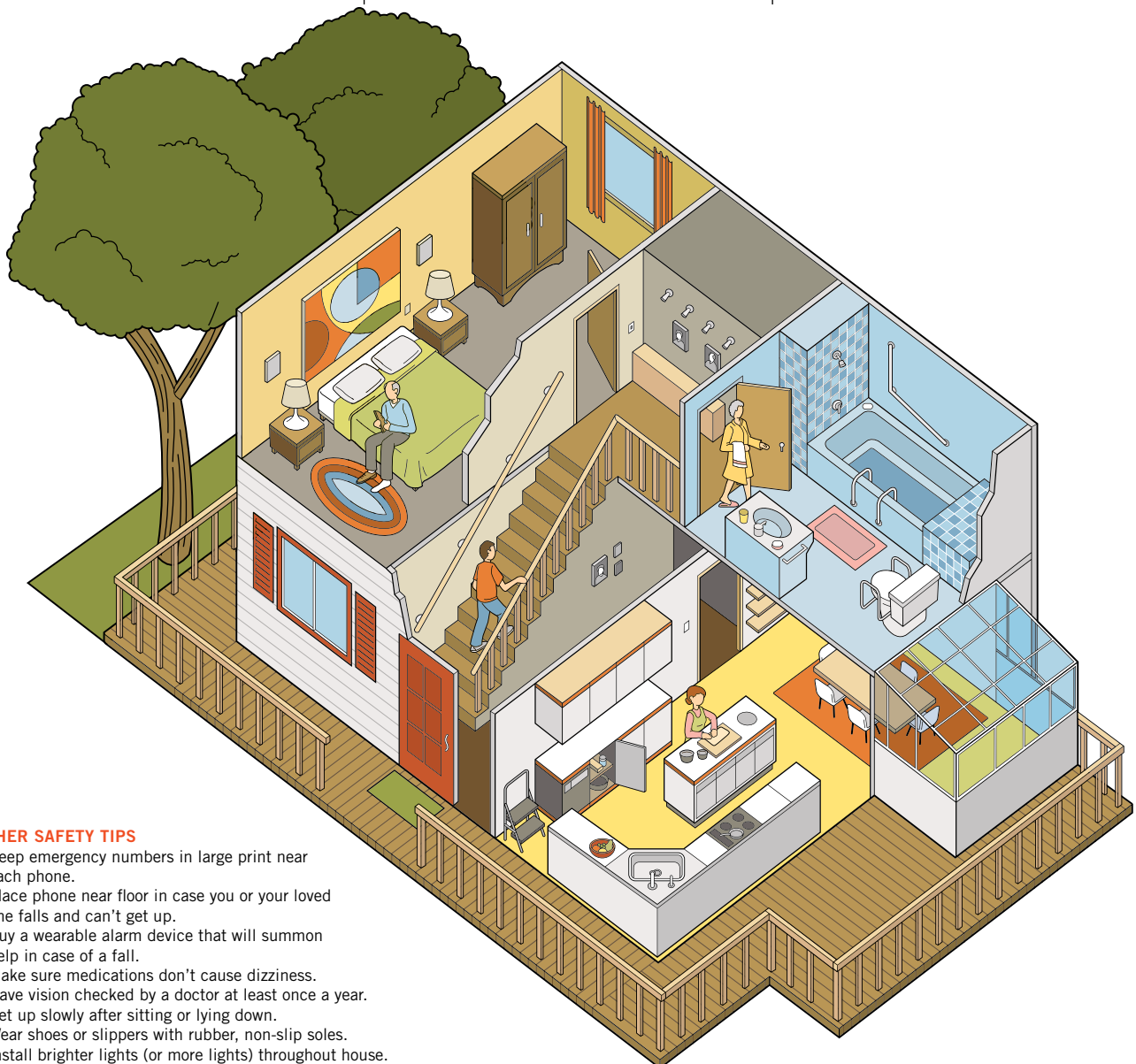
- Place all frequently used items on lower, more reachable shelves.
- Use only the best, most solid stepstool with hand bar to hold onto. Do not stand on a chair to reach items.

## FLOORS

- Move furniture to make a clear path.
- Add rubber backing to throw rugs or eliminate throw rugs altogether.
- Pick up objects from floor.
- Coil or tape cords and wires next to wall; install new outlets if necessary.

## BEDROOMS

- Place or install easy-to-reach light near bed.
- Install night-light to illuminate path from bedroom to bathroom.



## OTHER SAFETY TIPS

- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone.
- Place phone near floor in case you or your loved one falls and can't get up.
- Buy a wearable alarm device that will summon help in case of a fall.
- Make sure medications don't cause dizziness.
- Have vision checked by a doctor at least once a year.
- Get up slowly after sitting or lying down.
- Wear shoes or slippers with rubber, non-slip soles.
- Install brighter lights (or more lights) throughout house.