

Home Injury Prevention

More people are injured in their homes than anywhere else. Home safety is a concern for some people with myasthenia gravis (MG). You can minimize your safety risks—especially your risk of falling—if you follow some suggestions. With some forethought, most accidents can be prevented.

Questions you may have about preventing and preparing for possible home injuries

Things to Do if You Are Injured

- Call for help at once. Keep a telephone and emergency numbers on a low table. It will be easier to reach if you fall and have difficulty getting up.
- Consult with your doctor even if you don't think you are badly hurt.

General

- If you have an unsteady gait, using a walker or a cane after training by a physical therapist can lessen the risk of falling. Don't hold onto furniture or walls for support.
- Some insurance companies will pay for an occupational therapist to assess your home for safety and to help you make activities of daily living easier.
- Avoid overheating your home, as excessive heat can make myasthenic symptoms worse.
- Wear low-heeled, comfortable, supportive footwear with non-skid soles at all times.
- Have your vision checked annually.
- Talk with your pharmacist and health care provider about medications that may make you sleepy or dizzy.
- Exercise regularly.
- Be alert for objects that might cause you to trip. Keep walkways clear.
- Repair any holes or rough spots in your flooring, walkways or steps.
- Mop up floor spills immediately.
- Avoid rushing to cross the street or to answer the telephone or doorbell.
- Use non-skid wax or avoid waxing floors.
- Make certain that rugs lie flat. Secure them with carpet tape or tacks, double sided tape or non-slip backing. Don't use throw rugs.
- Install sturdy railings on both sides of staircases.
- Fix loose or uneven stairs.
- Install lights at the bottom and top of stairs.
- Keep stairs free of clutter.
- Take time to regain your balance when rising from a chair or bed.
- To maintain balance when picking objects up off the floor, stoop down, bending your knees rather than leaning forward.
- Sit in chairs that have armrests sturdy enough to assist you when getting up and down.
- Do not use a chair as a step stool.

- Use tape on electrical wires or coil them next to the wall to avoid tripping.
- Place light switches so that you can turn on lights before walking into a darkened room.
- Install bright lighting throughout the house.
- Change light bulbs as soon as they go out.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and be certain that they work.
- Install outdoor lights at all entrances to your home.
- Make a list of emergency phone numbers and addresses and keep them in a practical place.
- In case of fire, have an emergency exit plan. Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
- Keep a flashlight in a convenient location in case of power outages.
- Consider using a personal medical alarm help button system such as Lifeline®.
- Wear a medical identification bracelet or pendant.
- If you live alone, have a family member or friend check on you daily.
- Program your phone with emergency numbers in your contact list.

Bedroom Safety

- Place your bed within easy reach of lights and telephone.
- Use a night light to light the way between your bed and the toilet.

Bathroom Safety

- Limit the time you spend in the shower or bath to avoid weakness.
- Have someone assist you with bathing if weakness is a problem.
- Put non-skid strips or a rubber mat in the tub or shower.
- Install grab bars on the wall or side of the tub or shower.
- Use a shower chair or bath seat with rubber grips if you are unsteady.
- Keep the floor dry to avoid slipping.
- Use a hand-held showerhead to make it easier for help in bathing and rinsing off.
- Use liquid soap or soap on a rope to avoid dropping the soap.
- Install a raised toilet seat and grab bars on the wall if you have difficulty rising from a sitting position.
- To avoid burns, set the hot water temperature at 120° or lower.

Kitchen Safety

- Slide heavy containers of food along the counter (or use a cart) instead of lifting them when arms are weak.
- Put food in smaller containers, which are easier to lift and handle.

- To prevent fire, keep loose fitting clothes, towels and curtains away from the stove burners.
- Place items that you use frequently within easy reach so there is no need to climb.