

ELDER LAW REVIEW

June 2017

Safety Tips

Every one of us either has or will come to the realization that as we age our senses naturally decline. For older individuals this may mean difficulty hearing some or all sounds, difficulty seeing fine print, decline in sense of smell, and loss of coordination or balance. These are just some of the changes that take place as we age. These changes may be inconvenient at best, but they can result in danger as well. June is National Safety month. We think this is the perfect time to focus on the dangers associated with aging and some precautions that can be taken to minimize risks.

1. Check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors not only for fresh batteries but also to ensure that the equipment is loud enough for you to hear no matter where you are in the home.
2. Invest in a weather alert radio that has an adjustable volume to ensure that you are notified in the event of dangerous weather.
3. Reading the fine print on prescriptions can become more difficult with age. Use of reading glasses may help but it may be more beneficial to invest in a pill reminder or caddy that can be set up with daily pills. You may also want to check with your pharmacist about using larger labels on medication bottles.
4. Over the counter medications can pose the same challenges as prescription drugs. Don't hesitate to ask a pharmacist for help with determining dosage or to help put a label with larger letters on the package so it is easier to read.
5. Falls are a major risk for individuals as they age. Most people think about falls in the bathroom or on a slippery sidewalk but don't consider the potential for falls elsewhere in the home. Using grab handles and grip mats in the bathroom will help to minimize falls there. In the rest of the house, check for loose throw rugs that could slip or bunch up, causing a fall.
6. Lighting can also reduce the risk for a fall. Nightlights are not just for children. They can be used in hallways and bathrooms to help light the way in the night for adults. Installing light switches at the top and bottom of stairs can also reduce fall risks. The type of lightbulb may make a difference as well. Some bulbs reduce glare, others reduce shadows, and others are better for certain tasks such as sewing or reading.
7. Exercise can also help reduce fall risks by improving muscle tone and coordination. There are many options for exercises that can fit most lifestyles and physical abilities. Talk with your doctor about the types of exercise that are most beneficial to your situation.
8. Choking hazards are often associated with small children. Use of dentures can increase the risk of choking in adults. Cutting food into smaller bites and being aware of the risks are steps that you can take to avoid choking.

These are just a few suggestions that can help make the home a safer, more enjoyable place for adults as they age. Pluto Legal hopes you have a safe summer.

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