Patients with ALS: Home Safety

This handout will provide information for keeping you safe in your home. Many accidents occur in your home where you feel most safe.

**Entrances**
- Clear and level walkway from parking area to door.
- Adequate lighting; motion sensing switches recommended.
- Threshold beveled and not more than ¼ (one-quarter) of an inch high.
- Lever door handles at entrance and throughout house.
- Keyless entry is recommended.
- Entrance protected from rain, snow, and ice.
- Clear 4x4 feet (minimum) entrance in home.

**Stairs (Inside and Outside Home)**
- Consider ramp and modifications to create a single floor set up.
  - For every foot of elevation, ramp must extend 12 inches (12:1 ratio).
- Steps are an appropriate height (no more than 8 inches) and depth (not less than 11 inches).
- Non-skid surface on steps.
- Hand railing at an appropriate height (usually 30-34 inches) with additional 1-foot extension of handrails at top and bottom of stairs.
- Outside steps protected from rain, snow, and ice.

**Floors**
- Floors level with non-skid surfaces.
- Throw rugs and runners are not recommended. If present, they must be secured to the floor with double-sided tape, tacks, or slip-resistant backing.
Thresholds should be beveled, clearly marked, and not more than ¼ (one quarter) of an inch in height.

Necessary cords and wires moved out of traffic flow and secured to floor.

Floors kept free of clutter.

**Bathroom**

- Non-skid floors preferred.
- Any rugs secured with double-sided tape, tacks, or slip-resistant backing.
- Grab bars of 1-1/2 (one and a half) inches to 1-1/4 (one and a quarter) inches in diameter installed for use around the toilet, tub, and shower spaced 1-1/2 (one and a half) inches from the wall and 36 inches from the floor.

- **Towel racks and soap dishes are not acceptable substitutes for grab bars as they are not loadbearing** (they cannot support the weight).
- Toilet or raised toilet seat, minimum around 20 (inches) from floor.
- Non-skid surface in bottom of tub or shower.
- Shower chair or tub bench with rubber, non-skid leg tips and back support.
- Hand held nozzle is within reach when seated.
- Thermostat controls on shower head and faucets for pre-set temperature.
- Lever-style faucet handles.
- Adequate lighting.
- Door hinged so that it opens from out of the bathroom.

**Bedroom**

- Light at entrance.
- Bed at appropriate height; a bed that is too high may be hard to get into and a bed that is too low may be difficult to stand from.
- Light or light switch within reach from the bed.
Kitchen
→ Light switch at entrance.
→ Adequate lighting at all work spaces.
→ Non-skid floor.
→ Regularly used supplies, dishes, and food items kept at an appropriate height (between hip and eye level) but not above stove.
→ Heavy utensils and appliances kept on countertop.
→ Clear counter space from stove to sink so heavy items can be slid not carried.
→ Sturdy step stool of appropriate height (not more than 8 inches) and depth (not less than 11 inches).
→ Appropriate height stool/chair (with back support) to allow seated rest breaks during cooking tasks or social gatherings.
→ Transport dishes or small (non-heated items) on wheeled cart (or 4-wheeled walker seat) from counter to/from table.
→ Consider adaptive equipment for energy conservation and modification:
  o Electric can opener
  o Dycem
  o Rocker knife
  o Built up utensil handles
  o Scoop plate
  o Bowls with handles
  o Long straws

***Clinic Occupational Therapist can provide further clarifications and additional adaptive equipment that can work best for you.

Phones & Communication
→ Keep cell phone or emergency alert systems on lanyard around neck when home alone, or when using toilet or showering.
→ Consider applications for voice amplification when vocal involvement.
→ Consider use of in home voice control systems, such as, “Alexia”, “Siri”, “Google Home”, etc., for voice calling in the event of fall or injury.
→ Install amplifiers or speakerphone service if needed.