

Aging in Place: Tips for Home Safety for New Hampshire Seniors

Home Modifications, Safety Checks and Contractor Resources Provided by Live Free Home Health Care

BRISTOL, NH – (June 15, 2010) – Senior Resource reports that about 70% of people over 65 spend their remaining years in the home where they celebrated their 65th birthday. **WHY?** Most Americans desire to stay in their homes — 89% of people 50+ wish to remain in their own homes indefinitely (AARP). However, that may become increasingly difficult as physical difficulties do tend to accumulate with advancing age. Live Free Home Health Care, a local provider of in-home care for seniors, today announced that it is offering a series of free tips and tools to help the aging population of New Hampshire.

As a loved one ages, family members may notice physical difficulties such as balance problems, hearing impairment, limited reach, trouble bending and more. None of these are by any means life threatening and are sometimes issues with growing older. However, they can inhibit a safe, happy home life.

A concept called “**aging in place**” allows seniors to live in their own homes, using products, services, and conveniences which allow them to remain home in a safe manner. **Aging in place** is more than simply “staying at home”. For the senior, it translates into independence, confidence and emotional familiarity. For the family caregiver, it means modifications and safety education may be needed. Using the following tips and tools, Live Free Home Health Care delivers aging in place information for New Hampshire families.

What are some of the most important features of an aging in place ready home?

- A master bedroom and bath on the first floor
- A low or no-threshold entrance to the home with an overhang
- Lever-style door handles
- No change in levels on the main floor
- Bright lighting in all areas, especially places like stairways
- A low-maintenance exterior
- Non-slip flooring at the main entryway
- An open floor plan, especially in the kitchen/dining area
- Handrails at all steps

If a home does not accommodate these recommendations, hiring a trained contractor for modifications is a great alternative. According to Jason Harvey of Live Free Home Health Care, “As seniors age, their homes can become increasingly difficult to maintain and can even become unsafe. A growing trend is to utilize the skills of a contractor experienced in aging modifications. Examples include housing modifications, assistive technologies, and green strategies.” The National Home Builders Association (NAHB) reports that 75% of remodelers have seen an increase in requests for aging in place work, and 60% of remodelers already perform aging in place work.

Contractors are able to modify the home to accommodate impairments such as balance and coordination, hearing impairment, limited reach, limited vision, poor strength, poor flexibility, trouble walking and climbing stairs. Some common modifications that a contractor or family member could implement include:

Flooring

- Smooth, non-glare, slip-resistant surfaces, interior and exterior
- Low (less than ½ inch high pile) density carpet, with a firm pad
- Color/texture contrast to indicate change in surface levels

Counters and Cabinets

- Accented stripes on edge of countertops to provide visual orientation to the workspace
- Base cabinets with roll out trays and Lazy Susans
- Pull-down shelving
- Loop handles for easy grip and pull

Fixtures

- Grab bars in the shower and/or tub with fold down seat
- Curbless shower (a minimum of 36 inches wide)
- Lighted shower stall with hand-held head
- Higher toilet or height-adjustable toilet

Stairways, Lifts, Elevators and Ramps

- Hand rails on both sides of stairway

- Increased visibility of stairs through contrast strip on top and bottom stairs, color contrast between treads, risers on stairs and use of lighting

Live Free Home Health Care understand the needs of those aging in place and is now providing free in-home safety checks and will make recommendations for alterations to the home environment to make aging in place not only safe, but comfortable as well. Live Free Home Health Care can also recommend local contractors who are experienced in home renovations for seniors or disabled persons. Contact Live Free Home Health Care to find out more information on how modify a home for safety and convenience for seniors who wish to age in place.

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About Live Free Home Health Care, LLC:

Serving the Lakes Region and Central New Hampshire, Live Free Home Health Care, LLC is dedicated to providing top quality care in the comfort of home, wherever home may be. Family owned and operated, Live Free Home Health Care offers a wide range of services, from companion care and assistance with activities of daily living to skilled nursing. All care is supervised and updated by a registered nurse, who is specially trained to watch for new or changing health issues. Whether the need is for short or long term care, Live Free Home Health Care works with each client's physician to provide a continuum of care unparalleled with other agencies, and the compassionate staff promises to treat each client respectfully and like a cherished family member. Live Free Home Health Care also offers medical alert systems to provide extra peace of mind should an emergency care need arise. For further information, contact (603) 217-0149 or visit www.LiveFreeHomeHealthCare.com.