

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.

Developed by the Health Translation Service  
in collaboration with Blacktown Healthy Cities Inc.  
State Health Publication No. (HTS) 91-120  
ISBN 0 7305 3538 X

## Home Safety And The Older Person

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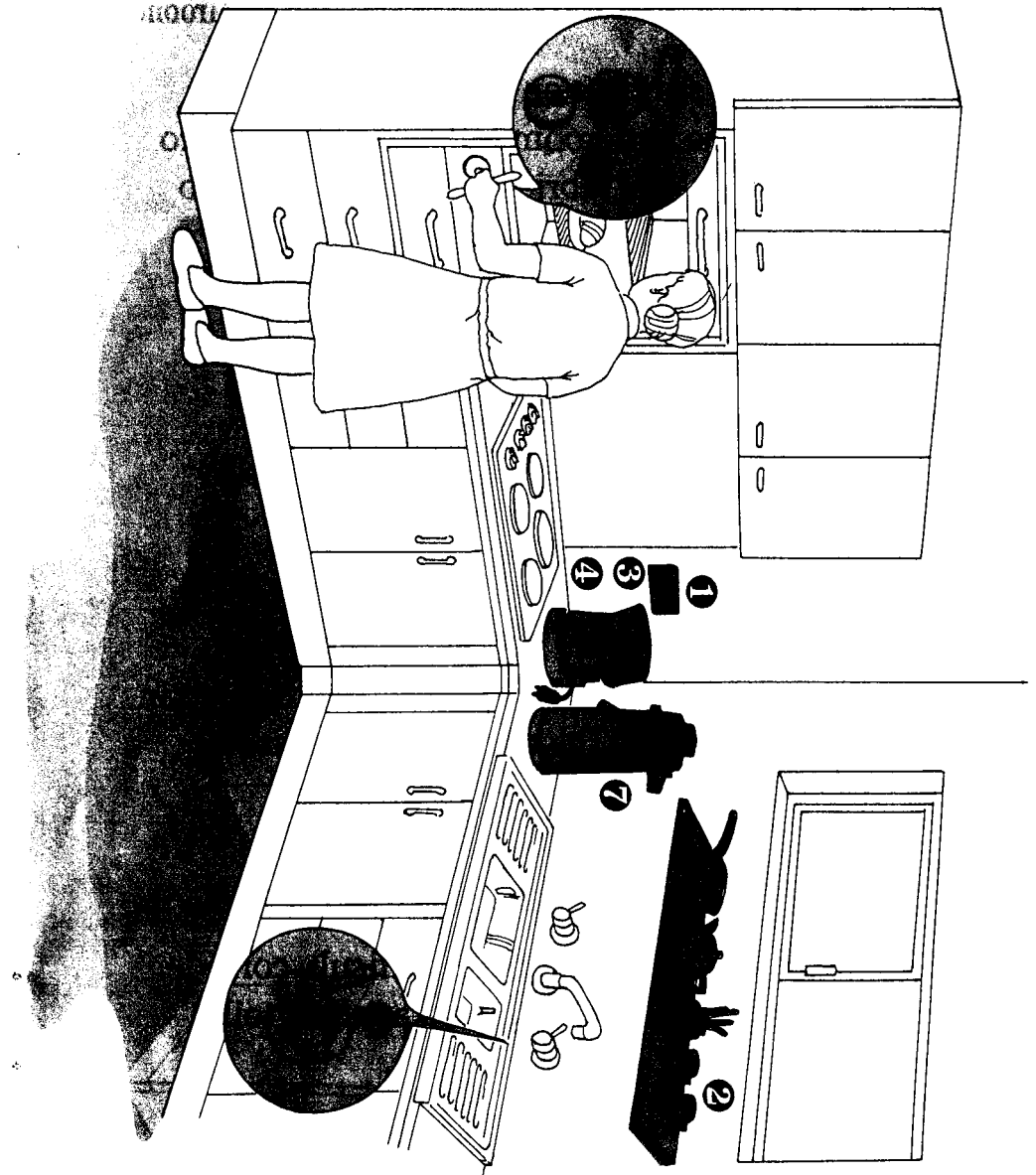
**A**s we get older, we sometimes face additional health problems, and may need to take extra precautions around the house. The following may give you some ideas:



# Kitchen

## Kitchen

- 1• Try to have power points placed where they are easy to reach.
- 2• Put items for everyday use where they can be easily reached.
- 3• Keep electrical appliances away from the sink.
- 4• Cordless irons and kettles are a good idea.
  - Kettles with wide bases are more stable.
  - Avoid filling the kettle to the top.
- 5• Make sure the floor surface is non-slip and always clean up water, food spills, etc.
- 6• If you have difficulty turning off stove knobs etc there are gadgets to help you.\*
- 7• If you have difficulty pouring from teapots, kettles, etc. there are aids available to help with this.\* Alternatively, ask someone to fill a push-top vacuum flask (it has a spout at the bottom, so avoids pouring action). This will provide you with hot water etc throughout the day.



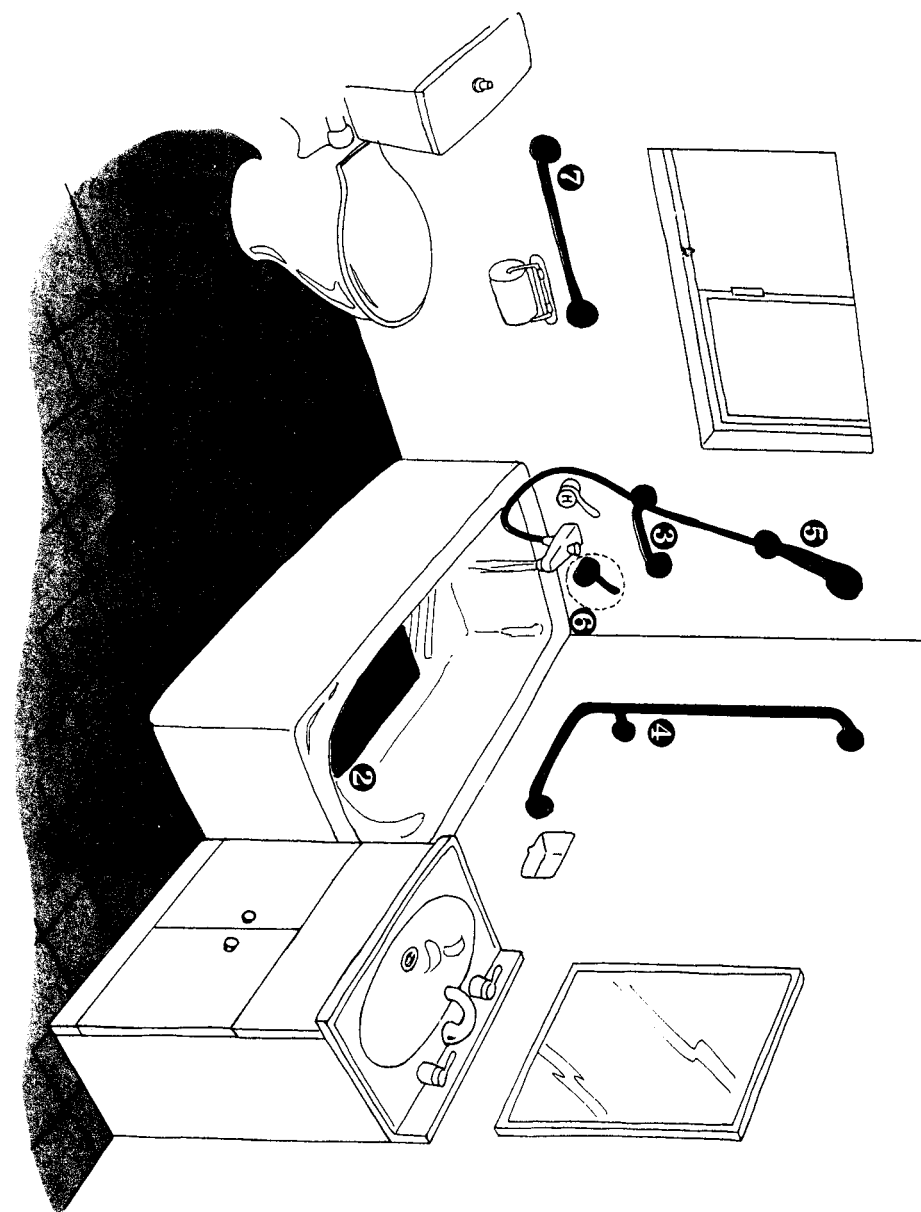
\* Information available from The Independent Living Centre (details at end of booklet) or hardware or specialist shops.

## Bathroom

### Bathroom

- 1• Avoid slippery surfaces on the floor and don't have mats in the bathroom unless firmly fixed to the floor (use special fabric to put under mats to keep them stuck down\*).
  - 2• Have a non-slip bath mat in bath or shower.
  - 3• If you have difficulty getting in and out of the bath, rails may be fitted to help you.\*
  - 4• "Grab rails" in the shower can help you steady yourself.\*
  - 5• A bath seat can be fitted or a hand held shower hose.\*
  - 6• Avoid scalding yourself by running the cold tap in the bath first and test the water temperature before getting in.
- Maybe the shower access can be altered to that you don't need to step over anything to get into it.
  - 7• If getting on and off the toilet is difficult, consider installing hand rails and perhaps a raised toilet seat.
  - Some hot water out of the tap can be scalding. many products are available to regulate the water temperature. Talk to your local county council about this.

- Avoid using electrical appliances in the bathroom.

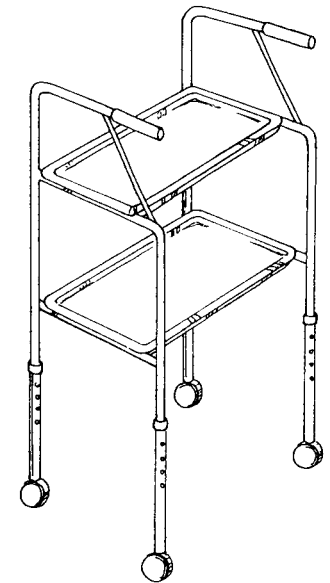


## Other areas of the house

### Other areas of the house

- Try to keep furniture to a minimum, especially if you have difficulty walking or need to use a walking frame.
- Avoid having mats on the floor, or make sure they are well stuck down.
- Check for worn carpet and loose flooring as these can be hazardous.
- The advantage to having cordless phones is that they can be carried around the house, and you avoid tripping over cords.
- A cordless vacuum cleaner may be helpful.
- Keep areas well lit at night: night lights, or blue or green light bulbs give a soft glow at night.
- Make sure all heaters have safety guards, particularly open fires.
- Avoid putting wet clothes, towels, etc over heaters to dry.
- Avoid using extension cords and double adaptors. Use a power board where you can.
- Always pull out plugs by gripping the plug not the cord.

- If you have difficulty walking, try to avoid carrying hot food on a tray. Using small tea trolleys may avoid accidents.
- If you have difficulty getting in and out of chairs, try using chairs with arm rests for leverage. Alternatively, try wooden blocks made to raise the height of the chair.



## Bedroom

### Bedroom

- In the bedroom, check the height of your bed. It may need to be lowered or raised so you can sit comfortably on the edge of the bed with your feet flat on the floor.
- Avoid beds on castors which will allow the bed to roll away as you sit on it.
- Take time to gain your balance when getting up from a chair or bed.
- Wear shoes or slippers that have slip-resistant tread patterns, a closed back (heel) and low heels with a broad surface.

## Medications

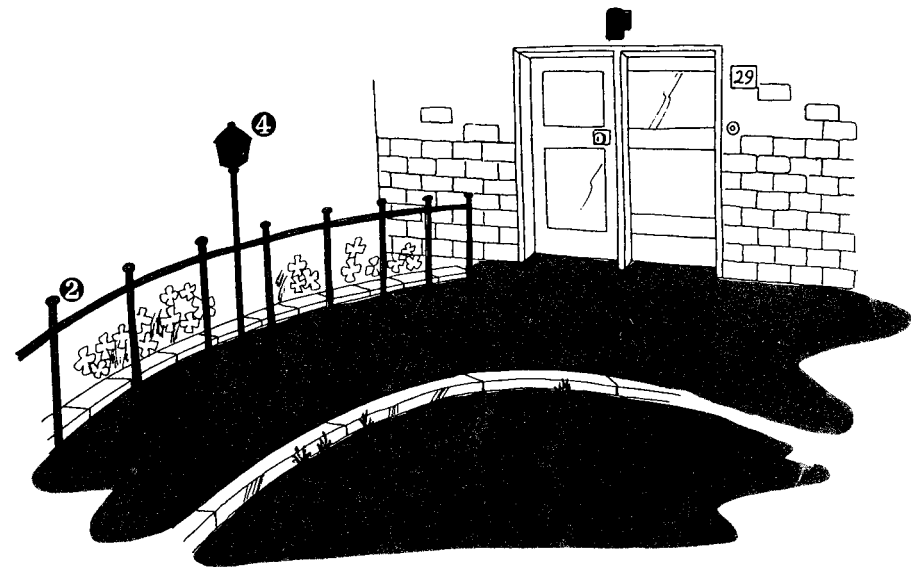
### Medications

- Remember that some medications cause dizziness, and may increase your tendency to fall.
- Store medications in a locked cupboard, leaving them in their original container.
- If not sure about your medicine, check with your chemist (pharmacy) or doctor. They can also check any medications which are past the "Use by ..." date, to see if they are safe to use.

## Outside

### Outside

- 1• Consider painting slippery paths etc. with non-slip paint available at hardware stores.
  - 2• Use handrails where necessary - have them installed near steps and stairs.
- Consider putting in ramps where there are steps.
- 3• How about getting a raised garden - and save your back!
  - There are lots of garden "gadgets" and tools for those who have problems.
    - 4• Make sure paths are well lit at night.



## Special Problems

### Special Problems

- If you have any special difficulties due to illness or disability, why not contact the Occupational Therapist at your local Community Health Centre. He/she is specially trained to advise you about house layout, aids to daily living, access arrangements, etc. He/she may also be able to lend you equipment or make suggestions of where to find it. You can find the phone number in the white pages of your telephone book. A free interpreter service is available at the Centre if needed.

## Financial assistance

### Financial assistance

- Ask the occupational therapist if you are eligible for financial assistance to help pay for your alterations from a government-funded programme.

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- \* The Independent Living Centre, 600 Victoria Road, Ryde is a free community service funded by the NSW Health Department. There are displays of a variety of helpful equipment/aids, etc. plus information on numerous manufacturers of safety conscious products and products to help people with special difficulties.

You may contact them on (02) 808-2233 for an appointment. A fully trained therapist is there to demonstrate and assist you with information.

If you need an interpreter, ask the Centre if one can be arranged for your appointment.

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