



Home Safety Checklist for Older Adults Returning Home from Rehabilitation

Returning home after rehabilitation can present new safety challenges. This checklist is designed to help family members and friends identify common mobility, accessibility, and fall hazards before a person returns home. It can help you recognize areas that may need attention to support a safer, more independent recovery.

1. General Questions

Start by asking these questions before looking at the home.

A. Mobility

- Will the person be using:
 - ☐ Walker
 - ☐ Wheelchair
 - ☐ Cane
 - ☐ Rollator
 - ☐ Crutches
 - ☐ No mobility aid
- Can they safely:
 - Stand without assistance?
 - Walk independently?
 - Climb stairs?
 - Get in and out of bed?
 - Transfer to a chair?
 - Get on and off the toilet?

B. Endurance

- How far can they walk?
- Do they tire easily?
- Do they become short of breath?
- Do they need frequent rest breaks?

C. Cognitive Questions

- Are they forgetful?
- Do they become confused?
- Are they safe using the stove?
- Do they remember medications?
- Will someone stay with them?

2. Getting Into the Home

Ask:

- Is there at least one entrance with minimal steps?
- Are the steps solid?
- Is there a sturdy handrail?
- Are both sides protected?
- Is the threshold difficult to cross?
- Is the doorway wide enough for a walker?
- Is there adequate lighting?
- Are house numbers visible for emergency responders?

Things to check:

- ☐ Loose surface materials
- ☐ Uneven concrete
- ☐ Cracked sidewalks
- ☐ Steep driveway
- ☐ Algae hazards
- ☐ Worn handrails
- ☐ Door difficult to open
- ☐ Heavy storm door

3. Inside Path of Travel

Can they move from each room without obstacles? Check for:

- ☐ Throw rugs (Should be removed)
- ☐ Electrical cords
- ☐ Furniture, pet bowls, clutter blocking pathways
- ☐ Narrow hallways
- ☐ Uneven flooring
- ☐ Raised thresholds
- ☐ Slippery tile

4. Bedroom

Can they:

- Get into bed?
- Get out of bed?
- Reach the light switch?
- Reach a phone?
- Reach medications?

Check:

- ☐ Bed too high
- ☐ Bed too low
- ☐ Sharp furniture corners
- ☐ Extension cords
- ☐ Poor nighttime lighting
- ☐ Clear path to bathroom

5. Bathroom (High Priority)

Can they:

- Step into the shower?
- Stand while showering?
- Sit safely?
- Reach soap?
- Use the toilet independently?

Check:

- ☐ Grab bars installed securely
- ☐ Toilet height appropriate
- ☐ Shower chair needed
- ☐ Handheld shower
- ☐ Non-slip flooring
- ☐ Shower threshold too high
- ☐ Glass doors difficult to navigate
- ☐ Sink accessible
- ☐ Towel bars being used as grab bars (unsafe)
- ☐ Toilet paper reachable while seated
- ☐ Shower controls reachable
- ☐ Water temperature safe
- ☐ Slip-resistant bath mat (outside shower)

6. Kitchen

Can they:

- Prepare simple meals?
- Reach frequently used dishes?
- Stand long enough to cook?
- Carry food safely?

Check:

- ☐ Frequently used items stored too high
- ☐ Heavy cookware overhead
- ☐ Slippery floors
- ☐ Poor lighting
- ☐ Difficult cabinet hardware
- ☐ Lever faucet preferred

7. Laundry

Ask, will they need to do laundry immediately?

Check:

- ☐ Laundry on another floor
- ☐ Steps required
- ☐ Heavy detergent containers
- ☐ Difficult controls

8. Stair Safety

If stairs are unavoidable, ask: Can they safely climb stairs today?

Check:

- ☐ Handrails on both sides
- ☐ Good lighting
- ☐ Non-slip treads
- ☐ Loose carpeting
- ☐ Objects stored on stairs
- ☐ Secure stair nosing

If they cannot safely use stairs, consider:

- Temporary bedroom relocation
- Stair lift
- Ramp
- Vertical platform lift

9. Lighting

Walk through the home after dark and check:

- ☐ Entry lighting
- ☐ Hallway lighting
- ☐ Bathroom night lights
- ☐ Bedroom lighting
- ☐ Stair lighting
- ☐ Exterior pathway lighting

10. Furniture

Things to check:

- ☐ Chair too low to stand from
- ☐ Recliner difficult to exit
- ☐ Bed moves when transferring
- ☐ Coffee table too close to walking path

11. Fall Hazards

Remove:

- ☐ Throw rugs
- ☐ Loose cords
- ☐ Magazine racks
- ☐ Plant stands
- ☐ Small tables
- ☐ Foot stools
- ☐ Clutter
- ☐ Pet food bowls, toys

12. Emergency Preparedness

Questions:

- Can they call for help?
- Do they carry a phone?
- Is there a medical alert system?
- Can emergency personnel reach the home?
- Is there a spare key or lockbox?

13. Daily Living

Ask whether they can independently:

- ☐ Bathe
- ☐ Dress
- ☐ Prepare meals
- ☐ Take medications
- ☐ Use the toilet
- ☐ Feed themselves
- ☐ Transfer to bed
- ☐ Get into a chair
- ☐ Get outside in an emergency

14. Equipment Checklist

Do they already have:

- ☐ Walker
- ☐ Rollator
- ☐ Wheelchair
- ☐ Cane
- ☐ Shower chair
- ☐ Raised toilet seat
- ☐ Grab bars
- ☐ Handheld shower
- ☐ Bed rail
- ☐ Ramp
- ☐ Stair lift
- ☐ Wheelchair ramp
- ☐ Portable threshold ramp

15. What Did The Therapist Recommend?

- ☐ Walker
- ☐ Rollator
- ☐ Wheelchair
- ☐ Transfer bench
- ☐ Bed rail
- ☐ Grab bars
- ☐ Raised toilet seat
- ☐ Handheld shower
- ☐ Ramp
- ☐ Stair lift evaluation
- ☐ Wheelchair ramp
- ☐ 24-hour supervision
- ☐ Home health therapy
- ☐ Home nursing

16. Medication Safety

Medication Management: Can the person:

- ☐ Read medication labels?
- ☐ Open prescription bottles?
- ☐ Remember medication schedules?
- ☐ Safely manage medications without assistance?

17. Outside Review

Around the Property

- ☐ Mailbox accessible
- ☐ Trash cans manageable
- ☐ Driveway well lit
- ☐ Exterior walkways level
- ☐ Hose across sidewalk
- ☐ Tree roots creating trip hazards
- ☐ Loose landscape edging

Support Questions

- Who will stay with your parent the first week?
- Is someone available overnight?
- Who prepares meals?
- Who manages medications?
- Who drives to appointments?
- What happens if they fall?
- What happens if the caregiver gets sick?
- Is this arrangement likely to work for six months if recovery takes longer than expected?

High-Priority Safety Items Before Returning Home

If nothing else can be completed before discharge, try to address these first:

1. Safe entry into the home.
2. Clear walking paths throughout the house.
3. Safe bathroom access with securely installed grab bars.
4. Adequate lighting, especially at night.
5. Eliminate trip hazards.
6. Safe bed transfers.
7. Safe toilet transfers.
8. Handrails on all stairs.
9. Necessary mobility equipment already in place.
10. A caregiver plan for the first several days.

Home Safety Rating

☐ **Green (Ready)**

0–5 concerns

Likely ready with minor adjustments.

☐ **Yellow (Needs Modification)**

6–15 concerns

Address recommended safety items before discharge.

☐ **Red (Needs Professional Evaluation)**

16+ concerns

Consider a professional home safety assessment before returning home.