Fall prevention:
The home can be hazardous

If you are the right age with the right risk factors, the home can be a dangerous place. More than half of the falls seniors take happen indoors, where they live, often with serious consequences.

Here are several risk factors that drive that statistic:
• Poor vision or hearing;
• A history of falls;
• Use of aids, such as a cane;
• Poor nutrition;
• Certain medications, such as medications for anti-anxiety or hypertension, sedatives or narcotics;
• Being 65 years or older;
• Home hazards, such as slippery floors, loose rugs or cords on the floor.

Here are some things you can do to reduce your risk of falling:

Hallways and Stairs
• Remove clutter.
• Rely on handrails when using the stairs.
• Place non-skid treads or attach bright reflective tape to mark the edges of the stairs.

Lighting
• Replace dim, burned out or glaring lights with bright, soft white bulbs.
• Use a night light.
• Make sure that lights are easy to reach.
• Keep a flashlight handy.

Floors
• Remove scatter rugs and throw rugs from your home.
• Place non-skid treads or double-sided tape under area rugs.
• Keep your floors free from clutter.
• Wipe up spills immediately.
• Make sure your floors are not slippery.

Bathroom
• Use a raised toilet seat and safety frame.
• Set the water temperature at 120 degrees or lower to prevent burns and falls trying to avoid burns.
• Consider installing a hand-held shower head, shower chair and handrails in your tub.
• Place non-skid adhesive strips on the bottom of your tub.
• Use liquid soap or soap-on-a-rope to help avoid dropping your soap.

Other locations
• Store items you use frequently at waist level.
• Select furniture with armrests for support as your are getting up and sitting down.
• Keep your telephone within easy reach.
• If you experience dizziness and weakness from poor nutrition or from changes in medication, you should consult your provider or outpatient nutrition therapist.

Source: NCPS+ Falls Toolkit