



Bathrooms May Be the Most Dangerous for Seniors

Traverse City, Mich.—For many seniors, living independent lives at home is their main desire. Seniors are able to do so provided they are physically and mentally able to care for themselves. Sometimes, depending on their situations, seniors need help and guidance from friends and relatives, or from even caregivers who can facilitate the potential of seniors living home alone for as long as possible.

The key to seniors maintaining independent lifestyles depends on many factors and most importantly their safety in doing so. With that being said, it should be noted that one of the most common dangers older seniors face is falling. In fact, research shows that injuries and subsequent complications due to falls are the leading causes of death in seniors who are 65 and older. Furthermore, one out of three seniors in this age group fall each year. While not every tumble guarantees an injury, these statistics should prompt seniors and their loved ones to make every effort to prevent falls occurring within their homes.

“The first place to evaluate is the bathroom,” says Leslie Knopp, Co-Owner of Comfort Keepers in Traverse City. “While this is the smallest room in the house, bathrooms potentially offer the most opportunities for falls to occur.” Bathtub edges may be hard to step over for some seniors. Once in the shower or tub, wet surfaces can cause seniors to slip. Some seniors may not be able to stand steadily while bathing. Others may have trouble sitting down on toilets or standing up again after using them. Wet floors after showers or baths and even bath mats can cause seniors to slip and fall.

Comfort Keepers offers these ideas and solutions for safety in the bathroom:

Bathtubs and Showers

Install grab bars in proper places to aid in safe entry and exit of tubs and showers. Consider replacing a bathtub with a walk-in shower for seniors who have trouble stepping over high bathtub sides. Non-skid mats or decal applications should be applied on the floors of showers and tubs to help prevent slipping while bathing. Seniors who have trouble standing to bathe should use sturdy shower chairs made specifically for this purpose. Make sure soap, shampoos, towels and other bathing necessities are within easy reach.

Toilets and Floors

Seniors who have trouble sitting and standing up can have raised toilet seats installed to make this process easier. Grab bars should be installed for additional support. Make sure the toilet paper dispenser is easily accessible. Use a bathmat for the bathroom floor just outside the shower or tub to prevent slipping on slick floors after bathing. Place a non-skid material between the bathroom floor to prevent the mat from sliding or creasing.

While none of these safety features guarantees a no-fall zone, they certainly add layers of protection and aid for seniors at risk for falling. Local home improvement stores carry safety devices made for specific purposes, and to ensure the safest results these items should be used instead of homemade devices. Another crucial element is installing safety aids properly

and also teaching seniors how to use them. “The discussion may be a bit hard to broach but the end result fosters safe, independent living for seniors in their own homes for as long as possible,” says Knopp.

For more information about Comfort Keepers services, call (231) 929-9044 or visit comfortkeeperstc.com.

About Comfort Keepers of Northern Lower Michigan

Comfort Keepers® of Northern Lower Michigan has been owned by Russ and Leslie Knopp since 2005. The organization provides in-home senior care on an hourly, daily, weekly or live-in basis for individuals who need assistance with activities of daily living. Its quality services are tailored to the individual needs of each client and, in the case of seniors, allow them to continue living safely and in the privacy of their own home.