

HOUSING AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

A Comprehensive Wellness Guide for **Healthy Homes**

HOME SAFETY - ACCIDENT AND INJURY PREVENTION



First Nations Housing
Professionals Association

L'Association des professionnels de
l'habitation des Premières Nations



Home

Prioritizing the wellness of the home is key to creating safe and supportive space for individuals and families. A home is more than just a physical space; it's a place of comfort, security, and belonging.

Creating a guide focused on supporting the wellness of the home is essential for promoting the overall well-being of its occupants. This guide offers practical tips and resources to strengthen various aspects of home wellness. By supporting the health of our homes, we also promote the physical and mental well-being of everyone who lives there.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Introduction
- 4 Home Safety
- 5 General Home Safety Tips
- 6 Kitchen Safety Tips
Bathroom Safety Tips
- 7 Bedroom Safety Tips
Living Room and Common Area Safety Tips
- 8 Outdoor Safety Tips
Accessibility
- 9 Home Emergency Kits
- 10 First Aid Kit Essentials

Acknowledgement

The **First Nations Housing Professionals Association (FNHPA)** is delighted to introduce the Housing and Wellness Program, aimed at offering crucial information and guidance to First Nations individuals residing on reserve or engaged in housing-related roles. This initiative delivers educational programs, tools, and resources tailored for First Nations housing staff, residents, and youth. Through the implementation of this program, our aim is to address housing, health, and safety concerns holistically.



HOME SAFETY - ACCIDENT AND INJURY PREVENTION

Many accidents happen at home when we least expect them. Whether you live alone or with children or older adults, identifying and addressing safety hazards can help reduce the risk of injury and create a safer living environment for everyone. Simple, everyday actions like keeping spaces organized, maintaining equipment, and staying aware of potential risks, can make a big difference in preventing injuries and supporting overall well-being.

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information intended to support home wellness, safety, and well-being. Each First Nation may have its own housing policies, programs, bylaws, and community guidelines. Please refer to local policies and community resources for the specific rules, responsibilities, and supports that apply to your home.

General Home Safety Tips

Small actions can make a big difference in preventing injuries at home. Here are some practical steps you can take to create a safer living environment:

Clear walkways

Reduce trip hazards by keeping floors and walkways free of clutter such as toys, cords, and shoes.

Safety gates

Install gates at stairways if you have young children or pets.

Handrails

Ensure sturdy handrails are installed on both sides of staircases for added support.

Rugs and carpets

Secure rugs and carpets with non-slip pads or double-sided tape to prevent slipping.

Lighting

Keep hallways, stairways, entrances, and outdoor areas well lit.

Childproofing

Use safety locks on cabinets, cover electrical outlets, and secure heavy furniture to prevent tipping.

Kitchen safety

Use caution when cooking, keep pot handles turned inward, and store sharp objects securely and out of reach of children.

Bathroom safety

Install grab bars in the shower and near the toilet and use non-slip mats in tubs and showers.

Fire safety

Install smoke alarms, test them regularly, and keep fire safety equipment accessible.



Poison prevention

Store cleaning products, medications, and chemicals out of reach of children and pets. Follow proper storage and disposal guidelines.

Heavy items

Store heavy items on lower shelves and secure tall furniture to walls.

Equipment maintenance

Regularly inspect and service appliances and home systems to prevent safety issues.

Organization

Keep frequently used items within easy reach to avoid unsafe climbing or stretching.

Awareness

Stay alert to potential hazards, especially during physical or household tasks.

Emergency contacts

Keep a list of emergency numbers, including local emergency services, poison control, and trusted contacts, in an easy-to-find location.

Kitchen Safety Tips

The kitchen is one of the most common areas for household injuries due to heat, sharp objects, and spills. Practicing safe habits can help prevent burns, cuts, and fires.

Stay attentive

Never leave cooking unattended.

Pot handles

Turn pot handles inward, away from the edge of the stove, to prevent spills and burns.

Flammable items

Keep dish towels, paper towels, and other flammable items away from the stovetop.

Clean spills

Wipe up spills right away to prevent slips and falls.

Knife safety

Use knives carefully, keep them sharp, and store them securely.

Appliance use

Follow manufacturer instructions, clean appliances regularly, and check cords for damage.

Burn and scald prevention

Use caution when handling hot foods and liquids. Use heat-safe cookware and utensils, and use oven mitts or potholders when handling hot dishes, pans, or lids.

Childproofing

Use safety locks on cabinets and drawers to keep sharp or hazardous items out of reach.

Chemical storage

Store cleaning products and chemicals locked away from children and pets.

Oil and grease fires

Never use water on a grease fire. Smother flames with a lid or use a fire extinguisher if it is safe to do so.

Fire extinguisher access

Keep a fire extinguisher in or near the kitchen and make sure household members know how to use it.

Bathroom Safety Tips

Bathrooms can be slippery and pose risks related to water, heat, and electrical use. Taking simple precautions can help prevent falls, burns, and other injuries.

Non-slip surfaces

Use non-slip mats or adhesive strips in the bathtub and shower to reduce the risk of slips and falls.

Grab bars

Install sturdy grab bars in the shower and near the toilet for added support, especially for older adults or those with mobility challenges.

Dry floors

Wipe up water spills promptly and use bathmats with rubber backing to prevent slipping.

Secure rugs

Use non-slip pads or tape to keep bathroom rugs firmly in place.

Water temperature

Set your water heater to a safe temperature to prevent burns and scalding.

Medication storage

Store medications in locked cabinets or on high shelves, out of reach of children and pets.

Shower seating

Use a shower chair or stool to provide stability for those who need extra support.

Handheld shower head

Install a handheld shower head to improve control and ease of use.

Lighting

Make sure the bathroom is well lit, especially around the shower, toilet, and entryway.

Electrical safety

Keep electrical appliances such as hair dryers and curling irons away from water sources.

Childproofing

Use cabinet and toilet locks to prevent children from accessing cleaning products or medications.

Regular maintenance

Inspect fixtures, grab bars, and flooring regularly, and repair any damage promptly.

Bedroom Safety Tips

Bedrooms should be a safe and comfortable place to rest, but they can still present risks such as falls, fire hazards, and electrical safety concerns. Taking a few simple precautions can help create a safer environment for everyone.

Lighting

Use nightlights or bedside lamps to prevent trips in the dark.

Clear pathways

Keep walkways free of clutter such as shoes and clothing to reduce tripping hazards.

Rugs

Secure rugs with non-slip pads or tape to prevent slipping.

Bed height

Ensure the bed is at a safe, comfortable height for getting in and out, especially for older adults or those with mobility challenges.

Essentials nearby

Keep items such as a phone, flashlight, glasses, or water within easy reach.

Outlet safety

Avoid overloading outlets and use outlet covers to protect young children.

Bed rails

Install bed rails if needed to reduce the risk of falls for children or older adults.

Fire safety

Install and test smoke alarms in bedrooms and make sure everyone knows the fire escape plan.

Window safety

Use window locks or guards to prevent falls, especially in homes with children.

Furniture stability

Anchor dressers, bookshelves, and other tall furniture to walls to prevent tipping.

Heating devices

Avoid using space heaters or electric blankets unless they are designed for overnight use.

Living Room and Common Area Safety Tips

Living rooms and common areas are high-traffic spaces where trips, falls, and other accidents can occur. Keeping these areas organized and well maintained can help reduce risks and improve overall safety.

Clear floors

Keep floors free of clutter such as toys, shoes, and cords to prevent trips and falls.

Rugs

Secure rugs with non-slip pads or tape to prevent slipping.

Furniture layout

Arrange furniture to create clear walkways and ensure items are stable and secure.

Childproofing

Use corner guards, outlet covers, and other childproofing tools where needed.

Lighting

Keep hallways, stairways, and shared living spaces well lit.

Cables and cords

Tuck away or secure loose cables to reduce tripping hazards.

Window safety

Use safety locks or guards on windows, especially in homes with children.

Stair safety

Ensure stairs are well lit and equipped with sturdy handrails on both sides.

Furniture anchoring

Secure TVs, bookshelves, and other large items to walls to prevent tipping.

Emergency readiness

Keep emergency numbers visible and store a first aid kit in an easy-to-find location.

Outdoor Safety Tips

Clear walkways

Remove snow, ice, leaves, and debris from driveways and paths to reduce the risk of slips and falls.

Lighting

Install and maintain lighting along walkways, stairs, and entryways to improve visibility at night.

Walkway maintenance

Inspect surfaces regularly for cracks or uneven areas and repair issues promptly.

Outdoor furniture

Secure or anchor tables, chairs, and umbrellas to prevent tipping in windy conditions.

Playground safety

Check play equipment for wear, sharp edges, or loose parts, and use soft ground materials where possible.

Pool and water safety

Fence pools and water features with self-latching gates and keep areas clear of clutter when not in use.

Water features

Maintain ponds and fountains regularly to reduce risks and prevent pest buildup.

Garden safety

Store tools and chemicals safely, and wear protective gear when gardening.

Wildlife awareness

Be mindful of insects, rodents, and other wildlife. Store food and garbage securely to avoid attracting animals.

Protective gear

Wear helmets, pads, and other safety equipment when biking, skating, or participating in outdoor activities.

Seasonal Safety Reminder

Outdoor hazards can change with the seasons. In winter, watch for ice buildup and falling snow or ice. In warmer months, be mindful of risks related to water, heat, insects, and increased outdoor activity.

Accessibility

Making your home more accessible can support safety, comfort, and independence for everyone, especially individuals with disabilities or mobility challenges. Here are some ways to improve accessibility in your home:

Install ramps

Use ramps with appropriate slope, surface, and handrails at entrances. Ensure they meet local building codes and accessibility standards.

Widen doorways

Allow easier access for wheelchairs and mobility devices.

Remove rugs

Loose rugs can create tripping hazards and block mobility aids.

Non-slip flooring

Use non-slip materials, especially in bathrooms, kitchens, and other moisture-prone areas.

Grab bars and handrails

Install in bathrooms, near toilets, and along stairs to provide support.

Bathroom accessibility

Consider features like a roll-in shower, handheld shower head, or shower bench. Ensure sinks and mirrors are at accessible heights.

Kitchen accessibility

Lower countertops and sinks where possible to improve usability.

Lighting

Ensure bright, even lighting throughout the home to improve visibility and reduce the risk of falls.

Visual and tactile cues

Use contrasting colours, labels, or textures to support navigation and safety.

Accessible storage

Use adjustable shelves and cabinets with pull-down racks to make storage spaces easier to reach and use.

Clear pathways

Keep pathways free of clutter and obstacles to support safe and easy movement.

Accessible switches and controls

Lower light switches and thermostat controls to a reachable height for wheelchair users.

Comfortable furniture

Choose furniture with firm cushions and armrests to support sitting and standing. Ensure there is enough space around furniture for mobility aids.

Home Emergency Kits

Having a home emergency kit helps ensure you and your household are prepared for unexpected situations such as power outages, natural disasters, or evacuations. Here are some essential items to include:

Water

Store at least 2 litres of water per person per day for at least 3 days, for drinking and sanitation.

Non-perishable food

Keep shelf-stable foods such as canned goods, granola bars, nuts, and dried fruit. Include a manual can opener and replace food supplies at least once a year.

First aid kit

Keep a well-stocked kit suited to your household's needs.

Flashlight

Have a flashlight with extra batteries or a hand-crank flashlight for power outages.

Emergency radio

Use a battery-powered or hand-crank radio to receive emergency alerts and updates.

Important documents

Store copies of identification, insurance policies, medical information, and emergency contacts in a waterproof container.

Emergency Preparedness

Have a plan in place for emergencies, including accessible exits and communication methods for everyone in the household. Be aware of your community's Emergency Management Operations (EMO) procedures and how to access assistance if needed.

Note: Accessibility modifications should follow applicable building codes, accessibility standards, and community housing policies. Always consult your housing department or qualified professionals before making structural changes.

Cash

Keep a small amount of cash on hand in case ATMs or payment systems are unavailable.

Emergency plan

Include a copy of your household emergency plan in your kit.

Emergency contacts

Keep a written list of contact information for family members, friends, and local services.

Other items to consider:

- Personal hygiene supplies
- Multi-tool or Swiss Army knife
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Whistle
- Pet supplies
- Duct tape and plastic sheeting
- Extra clothing
- Maps
- Entertainment (e.g., books or games)
- Sanitation supplies

First Aid Kit Essentials

A well-equipped first aid kit is important for treating minor injuries and managing emergencies until help arrives. Here are some items to include:

Wound Care

- **Adhesive bandages:** For small cuts, blisters, and scrapes (various sizes).
- **Sterile gauze pads:** For dressing larger wounds and controlling bleeding.
- **Medical tape:** To secure gauze and bandages.
- **Antiseptic wipes or solution:** For cleaning and disinfecting wounds.

Eye and Skin Care

- **Sterile eyewash:** To flush debris or chemicals from the eyes.
- **Tweezers:** For removing splinters, ticks, or debris.
- **Scissors:** To cut gauze, tape, or clothing if needed.
- **Disposable gloves:** Use non-latex gloves to help prevent infection and contamination.

Pain and Swelling Relief

- **Instant cold packs:** To reduce swelling or ease pain from sprains and bruises.
- **Elastic bandage (e.g., compression bandage):** For wrapping and supporting sprains and strains.
- **Triangular bandage:** For making slings, securing splints, or providing support.

Emergency Tools & Comfort

- **Emergency foil blanket:** Helps retain body heat and prevent hypothermia.
- **Flashlight with extra batteries:** Or a hand-crank flashlight for low-light situations.
- **First aid manual:** A simple guide with instructions for treating common injuries.
- **Emergency contact list:** Include phone numbers for family, healthcare providers, poison control, and local emergency services.





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