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ADD SAFETY TO YOUR SPRING CLEANING 'TO DO' LIST

Help Protect Your Family By Completing A Spring Safety Checkup

*North Olmsted, Ohio...*Ah, spring. The flowers come up. The leaves come out. And, the sun shines brightly into your home – highlighting the fact that it's time for some spring cleaning. While you're ridding the house of winter's dust and grime, it's also a good time to take a fresh look at something else your home may be in need of – a thorough Safety Checkup.

Why checkup on your home's safety? If you are like most Americans, your home is where you already feel the safest. However, every year unintentional home injuries occur, sending millions of people to the hospital. In fact, approximately 10 million unintentional home injuries were seen in U.S. emergency rooms annually between 1993 and 2000*. Checking your home for safety hazards now is the best way to ensure you and your family will remain out of harm's way throughout the year.

Fires/Burns

Smoke detectors should be located on every level of your home, and in or near all bedrooms. First, test all batteries in the alarms and make sure that they are in working order. Next, if you don't already have a fire drill plan in place, create one and be sure to practice it at least twice a year. The plan should identify at least

two exits out of every room and a designated area for family members to meet outside. Finally, if you have small children, use safety covers on all electrical outlets, keep your water heater setting at 120° F or less, and consider installing anti-scald devices in faucets to avoid potential burn zones.

Slips/Falls

In recent years, falls in or near the home accounted for nearly 16,000 deaths. All age groups are vulnerable, but older adults are most at risk. In fact, 80 percent of those fatally injured are over age 65.**

Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council, offers the following suggestions, “In order to help prevent slips and falls in the home, make sure living areas are well lit. Keep floors clear by reducing clutter and safely tucking telephone and electrical cords out of walkways. Also, don’t wax floors and use non-skid throw rugs to reduce chances of slipping on slick vinyl or hardwood surfaces. Finally, installing handrails in stairways, as well as grab bars in the bathroom, are wise ideas.”

More than 400 people a day go to hospital emergency rooms because of falls in the bathtub alone. To reduce the risk of slipping, add tread strips to your tub or shower floor. Also consider investing in a tub grip or grab bar for support. Tub grips can provide added balance when entering or exiting the tub. In addition, the new SecureMount™ Grab Bars from Homecare® by Moen® can be installed securely into the wall at any angle. Plus, several of the designer-styled models have new grip features for added safety in finishes such as Chrome, Brushed Nickel and Oil Rubbed Bronze to ensure a look that’s decorative, not institutional.

Poisonings

While medicine cabinets contain many items to make you feel better, their contents can be equally dangerous. Start your spring cleaning by discarding any drugs that are expired and then be sure the organized space is inaccessible to children. If it is in reach, consider installing a lock to avoid

tempting a child's curiosity. Also be sure to post the number to your poison control center near every phone.

Prepare yourself for the invisible sources of poisoning as well, by investing in a carbon monoxide (CO) detector. CO is produced whenever fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned. The amount of CO produced while using fuel-burning appliances is usually not harmful, but it can become hazardous when appliances are used improperly or are not functioning adequately.

Outdoor Injuries

“Home injuries are a year-round problem, but spring and summer activities can put families at even greater risk outdoors,” says Appy. “By making some easy adjustments to outside areas before the warm weather arrives, many accidents can be avoided.”

For example, many people don't think that practicing poison and safety precautions outside is as important as inside. Place pesticides and herbicides in original containers on high shelves or inside locked cabinets in the garage. Garden tools, particularly those with sharp points should also be kept out of the reach of children.

In the yard, clear away possible tripping hazards, such as rocks and roots. If you have a pool or pond, consider installing four-sided fencing with self-locking and self-closing gates. This will help prevent a gate from accidentally being left open. Also make sure any fencing around a pool or pond area is at least five-feet high.

While adding yet another item to your list of things to do this spring may seem overwhelming, it is simple to start with one room/area and work from there. By following these recommendations, you'll take comfort in knowing that you have a safe, clean and organized home that everyone can enjoy throughout the year.

For more information on the Home Care by Moen line of bath safety products, visit www.homecare.moen.com or call toll free (800) 882-0116.

All items from the Home Care by Moen line of bath safety products are available nationwide at Lowe's and at select home health and medical suppliers.

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*The Home Safety Council, The State of Home Safety in America Report

** The National Safety Council