

Brookdale Senior Living Solutions Newsroom

Turning the Tables: How to Prepare When Grandma Comes to Your House for the Holidays

Ring in a Safer Season for Your Senior Guests

BRENTWOOD, Tenn., Dec. 11, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- If a senior loved one will be jingling all the way to your house this holiday season, a few simple steps can make your home safer and more welcoming. With falls posing a particular threat to older adults, and additional challenges facing those with dementia, Brookdale Senior Living experts say these easy measures can ring in a jollier time for everyone.

"While a fall could happen almost anywhere, being in a less familiar environment can contribute to a senior's risk," said Sara Terry, Brookdale's senior vice president of resident and family engagement. She notes that the CDC reports that falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries to people 65 and above. "They are navigating a layout that's different than their own home, without the accustomed lighting, and possibly dealing with stairs and other features that could be difficult. Fortunately, simple solutions you can put in place ahead of time can make a major difference."



Clear clutter: Remove items lying on the floor; put away accent rugs, and remove or tape down power cords. If you need to keep the mat in your entryway, make sure it is secured with non-slip material. Clear leaves and other debris from the outside pathways leading to the house.

Add light: Replace soft light bulbs with brighter or higher-wattage bulbs. Add nightlights throughout your home to help the senior see not only during the night, but also on a dark winter day.

Provide one-level accommodations: Select a room on the main floor with easy access to the bathroom, kitchen and living room. Furniture, including the bed and chairs, should be at a comfortable height that's not too low or high. If stairs must be used, place contrast strips on each step to make it more visible.

Make the bathroom safer: Add non-slip strips in the tub or shower and a shower chair for comfort and ease of use.

Overcome dementia's dining challenges

If you are hosting a guest with dementia for a holiday meal, keep in mind the disease can cause visual and physical changes that have an impact on the dining experience. "As with home preparation, several simple measures can make mealtime easier and more enjoyable for these seniors," Terry said.

Use contrasting colors on the table to help overcome depth-perception issues. Set light-colored plates against a dark tablecloth or vice-versa. Prepare food of varying hues, so that meat and vegetables are easy to differentiate.

Serve the meal in a shallow bowl and provide a spoon, rather than using flat plate and a fork. It will be easier for your loved one to maneuver the food against the side of the bowl and into the spoon than manipulate it by fork against the plate.

Reduce possible confusion by cutting down or eliminating centerpieces and other decorations. Make sure the dining area isn't too warm or cold and that it's not overly noisy. A comfortable environment makes it easier and more enjoyable for your senior guest to remain at the table throughout the meal.

In addition to taking these measures, talk with your senior loved ones before they arrive. "Find out what will make them comfortable and relaxed in your home," Terry said. "Bringing the generations together to celebrate is what the holidays are truly all about and this way, you can enjoy the season to the fullest."

About Brookdale

Brookdale Senior Living Inc. is the leading operator of senior living communities throughout the United States. The Company is committed to providing senior living solutions primarily within properties that are designed, purpose-built and operated to provide the highest-quality service, care and living accommodations for residents. Brookdale operates independent living, assisted living, and dementia-care communities and continuing care retirement centers, with approximately 1,031 communities in 46 states and the ability to serve approximately 101,000 residents as of September 30, 2017. Through its ancillary services program, the Company also offers a range of outpatient therapy, home health and hospice services. Brookdale's stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol BKD.

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