



ARTICLES

PAGE 1 SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
 PAGE 1 AND 2 MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS
 PAGES 3 SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM
 PAGE 4 PREVENTING FALLS IN THE WINTER

Senior Safety News

Falls - How to avoid them and what to do if you do fall

We hope you all have had a safe holiday season and look forward to a healthy new year.

Winter, especially in the north, poses additional risks of falling. In this issue we focus with Medical Alert systems that can bring emergency care in case you do fall.

Over 30% of seniors age 65 and over fall at least once during the year.



Privacy and independence in the bathroom is also an issue that keeps us at home. We review simple devices such as hand bars, etc. that help you keep your balance and allows you to keep your independence.

We want you to enjoy family and friends in your home not in an institution. Stay safe by being aware of those hazards that can cause falls.

For safety tips go to Senior Safety Online by clicking on:

www.seniorsafetyonline.com

Medical alert services and equipment are used by many people to give them peace of mind in case someone who is elderly or ill needs emergency care and is unable to reach a phone. These are also known as personal response systems (PRS).

Choosing the right service and equipment for your needs and budget is important, and an important consideration is the contractual obligation involved. This varies by service provider. Many consumers have complained about deceptive sales practices and have unwittingly signing up for long-term contracts that they later regret.



Even so, medical alert systems can help the frail and elderly avoid nursing homes and assisted living

Key Considerations When Choosing a Medical Alert System

According to one company, an estimated 1.6 million people use some type of medical alert system.¹ For each user, needs may be slightly different, but the following factors should be carefully weighed no matter what your circumstances:

Does the provider have a high-quality monitoring center (often called a "central station")?

A good long-lasting battery backup for the console is important, especially in case of a natural disaster, when the elderly and disabled may need help the most.

According to an industry trade association, 24 hours is more typical. Some systems reviewed had far shorter battery backup.

..... Turn to next page

ADVERTISERS
 WE WELCOME ADVERTISING IN OUR NEWSLETTER!

The Buzz - Published by Senior Safety Online

Contact Information
 Phone: 302-290-2770
 email: customerservice

2136 W. 8th Street, Ste. 2, Wilmington, DE 19805



<u>ARTICLES</u>	
PAGE 1	SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
PAGE 1 AND 2	MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS
PAGES 3	SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM
PAGE 4	PREVENTING FALLS IN THE WINTER

Consider the battery life of the pendant/wristband. Battery life can differ significantly among providers, and a dead battery could have tragic consequences.

Using a service with a monitoring center will probably reduce the likelihood of false alarms, and provide trained help in resolving calls

Monthly fees can add up: \$300-500 annually. Consider how and by whom these will be paid

Is there a long-term contract commitment? Be careful of long term contracts.

Consider the layout of the home and the user's lifestyle, then look at the range of the monitoring device, which can vary widely by manufacturer).

Another key decision when shopping for a medical alert system is whether to purchase an ongoing monitoring service, or simply monitoring equipment without any ongoing services.

Monitoring Services

With these services, there is a servicing agreement entered into between the customer and a company that provides ongoing monitoring of the alert system. With these arrangements, the monitoring service is notified when the alert device is triggered, and is responsible for investigating and notifying the appropriate persons and/or emergency responders.

These services are more expensive than alert products that simply dial pre-programmed numbers (see "Equipment-Only Providers", below). A monthly fee is charged for the service, often \$30-\$40. There may also be a one-time installation or "activation" fee (\$50 to \$100 is common).

With monitoring services, it is important to evaluate the quality of the "central station"-- the centers where alerts and reminders (if any) are handled. Some things to look for:

1. Are the centers UL-listed? Underwriters Laboratories examines equipment as well as staffing issues.
2. Are they certified by an outside agency such as the Central Station Alarm Association (CSAA)?

Equipment-Only Providers

Some providers sell just the equipment necessary to pick up the alert signal from the alert button and place calls to pre-programmed phone numbers. They do not provide a monitoring center to receive and respond to calls, so there is no service agreement required. There is a small ongoing cost, however, of replacing the batteries in the pendant and monitoring device. *Source.....Lawserver.com*



<u>ARTICLES</u>	
PAGE 1	SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
PAGE 1 AND 2	MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS
PAGES 3	SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM
PAGE 4	PREVENTING FALLS IN THE WINTER

The bathroom can be a dangerous place for falls.

With porcelain tubs, wet tile floors and angled counters as hazards the results from a fall can often lead to traumatic injury. Maintaining independence and privacy in the bathroom is crucial to stay living at home. The following are helpful when some extra assistance is necessary in avoiding falls:

•Grab Bars

Grab Bars are available in a large variety of lengths and styles. When installing grab bars, be sure that they are the appropriate length and diameter for your needs and that they are placed where they will offer the most support. Remember to follow all precautions about appropriate wall preparation. If the wall is not strong enough to support the weight, the grab bar will not provide the support you need. Find a professional to do the installation for your own safety.

•Support Poles

The SuperPole is a tension pole that is secured between the floor and the ceiling and provides a full range of heights to hold onto while sitting or standing up. Unlike the grab bar, the SuperPole can be installed anywhere there is a floor and ceiling, including in the middle of a room, to provide support exactly where it is needed. By holding onto the pole at a comfortable level, you can use your arm strength for balance and support as you seat yourself on the toilet.

When ceilings are too high or cantilevered, there is also a floor-mounted pole that adjusts up to 32” in height and is secured to the floor for stability. This model features a pivoting and locking horizontal bar to provide additional support while transferring to and from the toilet.

• Toilet Safety Frame

Toilet Safety Frames can aid as a guide for sitting and as a push-off point for rising, because they provide arm rests on either side of the toilet. For added stability, look for a model that is secured to the toilet with bolts.

•Raised Toilet

For those who have trouble bending, raised seats can add an additional height of two to five inches to the toilet seat.

There are alternatives to the somewhat clinical look of a raised toilet seat. The Toilevator is a spacer that is installed under the base of your toilet, adding 3.5 inches of additional height to any 14 or 15 inch toilet while still maintaining the appearance of your toilet. Another alternative is the installation of a 17” high toilet, which is several inches higher than the average commode (and ADA compliant).



<u>ARTICLES</u>	
PAGE 1	SENIOR SAFETY NEWS
PAGE 1 AND 2	MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEMS
PAGES 3	SAFETY IN THE BATHROOM
PAGE 4	PREVENTING FALLS IN THE WINTER

Prevent winter with these six safety hints!

When you're caring for an older adult, falls are a constant fear. And we also know from hard experience that falling is an enormous risk for older adults. A fall -- especially if it results in a fracture -- can put in motion a chain of events and health issues that compromises an older person's ability to live independently and can even result in disability or death.

1. Choose footwear carefully. Because snow, ice, and rain-slicked pavement are slippery, traction is what you need. For traction, you need tread -- a surface with bumps and hollows. Think about basketball shoes, with plenty of tread to grip polished gym floors, or hiking boots with lugged soles for mud. Many "comfort" shoes, popular with seniors, have rubber soles but they're smooth - you need something with grooves where the water and ice can go.

2. If you have snow, shovel it -- carefully. Shoveling is hard work, but the alternative -- tripping and falling in loose snow -- is much worse. When shoveling, pay attention to leaving a level surface when you're done. Even out any bumps so there's nothing to trip over. Don't let the person you're caring for overdo it with the shoveling, though -- that's a perfect way to throw out your back. Pay a local teenager to do it instead. Or try a new device called the wovel -- a safety-oriented shovel on wheels. Keep the shovel or wovel where it's handy but where there's no danger of tripping over it. Inside a coat closet, for example, would be perfect.



3. If you have ice, use salt. Salt dissolves ice and leaves a gritty surface that's much easier to walk on. Keep a bag of salt right by the front door; if you or the person you care for has to walk to the shed or garage to get it, you've defeated your purpose.

4. Have plenty of railings and handholds available. Anyone who's frail or has balance problems should never try to walk on a slippery surface without something to hold onto. Make sure railings are sturdy and free of snow and ice or that there's someone there to offer an arm to hold onto.

5. Use modern technology. Hopefully the person you're caring for has a cell phone; make sure it's with him and turned on when he leaves the house. If the person you're caring for is living independently and has balance or mobility issues, consider a monitored safety alarm device that alerts a monitoring center when the person wearing it falls.

6. Allow extra time. When preparing to leave the house, give yourselves a few extra minutes so there's no rush. People who fall almost always remember afterwards that they were rushing or harried and not paying attention to safety.