

# SAFETY SENSE

## Preventing Slips And Falls In Your Home

(NAPSA)—The foundation for home safety may be right underneath your feet...your carpet. Slips and falls within the home are the leading cause of injury among children and adults over 65. For families living with a grandparent or young children, reducing the risk of slips and falls is a primary concern in creating a safe home. Here are some home safety ideas from experts at the Carpet and Rug Institute:

Whether there is a spill or water is tracked in from outside, when most flooring surfaces get wet, they become slippery. Carpet provides a stable, nonslip surface. If carpet does get wet, it maintains its ability to create traction and secure footing. Slips and falls can lead to serious injury, and sometimes even death. Carpet not only reduces the likelihood that a slip will occur, it softens the impact of the fall and its softness reduces the chances of injury.

Most carpet has an additional layer of cushioning underneath, further decreasing the chance of bruising or injury. Carpet also has the added benefit of helping reduce back and leg fatigue. Nurses especially agree that carpeting helps keep their foot and backaches to a minimum.

Another way to reduce the probability of slip and fall injuries is to place rugs or mats by entrances, kitchen sinks, or areas where flooring is most likely to get wet. Rugs and mats will absorb the moisture, reducing the risk of a slip and fall injury further in the home.

Even while decorating, there are simple measures that homeowners can take to reduce the



**DON'T TAKE THE FALL**—Placing rugs and mats at entrances reduces the probability of a slip.

chances of tripping and falling within the home. Choose patterns that do not disguise the edge of steps, height differences and level changes. This is very helpful with "sunken" or "raised" rooms.

In rooms where handicapped or elderly individuals spend a lot of time, homeowners should avoid shag carpet or carpet with a thick pile height. These styles are more likely to get caught on walkers or shoes, causing tripping and possibly an injury. Level loop or cut pile styles or styles with low pile height, will provide all of the benefits of carpet, without the risk of tripping.

The softness and cushioning nature of carpet is ideal for family activity—whether it is the first steps of a toddler, the deliberate steps of a grandparent, the hurried steps of a busy adult or teenager, or the many steps of the homemaker.



**Note to Editors:** This article is one in a series of 6 to educate the public about the health and safety benefits of carpet and rugs in addition to the importance of maintaining proper care of them.