



# Am I Safe?

## Safety Conversation Guide

For patients and their caregivers

Whether you are receiving care or supporting your loved one, communicating your concerns and being aware of your safety needs are very important. This **ACT** conversation guide will help you in talking openly and honestly with your doctor, nurse or other member of the health care team about safety in the home so you can extend your independence and stay in your home for as long as possible.

- ✓ **ASK QUESTIONS** about how to be safe when receiving care in your home.
- ✓ **COMMUNICATE** your concerns and what is important to YOU.
- ✓ **TAKE CONTROL** by knowing what to do to be safe and avoid accidents in your home.

### HEALTH CONDITION

How is your condition impacting your safety?

Knowing how your health condition affects your physical and mental abilities can help you take important steps to improving your safety and quality of life.

#### ASK

- How will my condition affect things at home?
- What are some symptoms I should be aware of that may impact my safety?
- What changes (physical, behavior or emotional) should I pay attention to?

#### COMMUNICATE

- If you are having problems remembering things or any changes in how you feel.
- Any challenges with your physical abilities (walking, getting out of bed).

#### TAKE CONTROL

by keeping a record of any changes in how you feel physically, emotionally and mentally: when it happens and how often, what makes it worse or better.

### CARE PLAN

Are there side-effects of your treatment that impact safety?

You may be taking medications for your health condition or receiving ongoing treatments. It is important to understand how these can impact how you feel and if you are dealing with side effects that may impact your safety and well-being.

#### ASK

- What side effects could I feel from the medications? Will they impact my safety?
- How are my treatments affecting my physical well-being?
- Who should I call if I'm not feeling well?

#### COMMUNICATE

- How you feel before and after you take your medications or your treatments.
- If you feel unsteady or have recently fallen.
- If you don't feel "right" or are worried about your safety.

#### TAKE CONTROL

by keeping a record of your medications and treatments, and the names and phone numbers of your doctor, home care providers and other members of your care team.

## LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Are you living and acting safely?

Being independent and safe means making good choices in how and what you eat, how much exercise you do and whether you drink alcohol or smoke. Alcohol and over-the-counter drugs or herbal remedies can interfere with medicines or cause certain symptoms.

### ASK

- What are some tips I can do to manage my condition and stay safe at home?
- Are there any activities that I should do or not do?
- What type of diet should I have?

### COMMUNICATE

- Any unexpected changes in your life – things that make you feel stressed or concern you.
- If you are not sleeping well or eating regular meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner).
- How you spend your day – what activities you do.

### TAKE CONTROL

by staying active and keeping in touch with friends and family. Keep an open mind and try different things - find out what makes you feel safe and happy.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Is your home safe?

Sometimes you have to make changes to your home to make it easier for you to carry out your daily activities, prevent accidents, and be safe. Installing grab bars in the bathroom, and easy to use handles, moving furniture, using brighter lighting or clearing space are all ways to help you stay safe.

### ASK

- What do I need to do to make my home safe?
- Where do I get the things I need?

### COMMUNICATE

- If you are having problems walking, bathing or getting around your house.
- How often are you taking walks outside your house – how far are you going?
- Is it becoming difficult to open your cupboards, turn on your faucets or do other things around your house.

### TAKE CONTROL

by routinely assessing your own needs and inspecting your home for any potential home safety issue.



Don't be afraid to clarify to make sure you understand what is being explained to you. Ask the person to write down his or her instructions for you.

HELPFUL PHRASES:

- "Can you please explain that to me again" or
- "What I am hearing you say is...is this right?"