

PATIENT PROOFING YOUR HOUSE

HOUSE:

You may not view them as such now, but after surgery, you will have a heightened sense of awareness of the numerous hazards and obstacles in your house. By making the following adjustments, your house can be a more conducive environment to your post-surgery needs.

- Fix and/or be aware of any uneven flooring in your house or uneven concrete on your driveway or patio.
- If you have steps leading up to your house, try wiggling the railing to gauge its stability, and tighten the screws if necessary. If you have outdoor steps without a railing, discuss installing one, especially if your surgery will take place during the winter months.
- Decrease your risk for falling by securing any loose cords or wires to the walls or behind furniture.
- Set your thermostat before you go in for surgery, especially if it is positioned high on the wall. This way, your house will be comfortable when you return, and you won't have to stand or reach to adjust the temperature.
- Store your groceries on low-level shelves so they are within reach without the need to strain or use a stepstool.
- Set up lamps, nightlights, or additional lighting in dimly lit areas. Avoid walking in the dark, when drowsy, or while using pain medications that cause dizziness or nausea. Keeping a flashlight nearby may also be useful in the event of a power outage.
- Be sure that all frequently used electronic devices have fresh batteries, are fully charged, and/or are firmly plugged into their outlets. The last thing you want to do after surgery is bend, twist, or crouch in awkward positions for hard-to-reach outlets.
- For safety and comfort reasons, check the batteries in your fire and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure that they are working properly and that they will last through your recovery period. You won't be able to change the batteries in fire detectors while recovering because of the danger posed by standing on chairs or stools.
- If you wear contacts or glasses, remember to keep them close to you at all times, and do not walk through the house without them. You may want to consider purchasing an extra pair of glasses for your convenience.
- If you don't already have them, consider purchasing satin sheets so that it's easier to slide in and out of bed when necessary without exerting too much effort.
- Buy, rent, or borrow books, magazines, and DVDs to help you pass the time as your body rests. Use remotes as necessary, and if your DVD player is not easily accessible without bending or crouching, consider moving it temporarily.
- Shop for a pillowed lap desk so that you can comfortably use your laptop while lying down.
- Purchase a reaching tool that can help you pick up things that have fallen on the floor.
- If you know that you will be spending a lot of time on your couch, reposition your ottoman to your comfort. You should certainly not be moving furniture or heavy items postsurgery.



601 Gateway Blvd.
Chesterton, IN 46304
www.LBJI.com

TEL 219.921.1444
FAX 219.921.0533

Chesterton • Crown Point • LaPorte • Michigan City • Portage • Schererville • Valparaiso

BATHROOM:

It is important to place emphasis on preparing your bathroom for postsurgical use because it is an area of the house where accidents are significantly more likely. Bathrooms are often tight spaces with a number of slippery surfaces and small appliances or utensils. Following these precautions can help you avoid an accident that could cause re-injury.

- Place the toiletries that you'll need within easy reach on your counter so that you don't have to strain to rummage through drawers or medicine cabinets.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of toiletries for your recovery period. You should set out additional rolls of toilet paper, as opposed to storing them under the sink.
- If your towels are stored in low places, such as in baskets or bottom cupboards, make sure they are within comfortable reach without the need to stoop or bend over.
- Set out a handheld mirror if you will need it to monitor your wound or for assistance in grooming.
- When it comes to showering or bathing, you should have a slip-resistant mat inside of the bathtub and a slip-resistant rug outside of the bathtub to reduce the risk of falling. You may also want to consider installing handrails to assist you when getting in and out.