

Concerns and Solutions as We Age in Place

By Karen Hauck, Chippewa Valley Aging in Place



Tasks that didn't seem like a problem a few years ago become more concerning as we age. Changing the light bulb, that when we were younger took more time to find than actually change it out, now takes planning. Now, we not only have to find a new bulb, but we also need to assess the safest way to replace it. Challenges can include poor eyesight, falling, lessened strength, or arthritis that makes the twisting of the bulb or the shade difficult. Because it takes a lot of time and planning, we often decide it is easier to let it stay burnt out, or we ask a friend or relative to help.

This is just one example of the many concerns we face when looking to stay in our homes as we age. Aging in place is all about planning. Continuing with the light bulb as an example, while it may take a bit of extra time, consider investing in long-lasting LED bulbs for hard-to-reach fixtures and get help to install them all at once. Then set a reminder to replace the light bulbs in four to five years. While this does not take away the challenges of changing light bulbs, it does make it a less common task.

That same strategy can be used with many concerns about staying in your home. We can make small changes over time that can make our home a safer and more comfortable place for us as we age. We start by taking those concerns and developing solutions for them.

According to a study done by AARP, adults who consider themselves "Baby Boomers" or older have the following concerns: being able to move about their homes safely, being able to use the features of their homes, finding the help they need to stay in their homes, being able to afford any home modifications needed, and having to be the primary caregiver

for another person. These are all very important concerns that can be solved by looking at them one at a time and connecting with professionals, family, and friends who can help with the planning.

Develop a "roll-a-deck" of your go-to connections to help you overcome your concerns. Start with assessing your home to be sure it will serve you into the future. Connect with your local ADRC or a Certified Aging in Place Specialist in your area—both resources will not only help with your home, but also have connections for in-home help for household chores and home healthcare.

As you expand your connections, include your local senior center, medical professionals, and financial planners. Each of these will provide additional options as you find the solutions that are right for you. Keep in mind, every person and family has unique situations, and you deserve to be completely comfortable with wherever you choose to live.



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