

## **Aging in Place: Kitchens and Meal Preparation**

Handout 2

### **Introduction**

Whether we are considering aging in place or moving to a new home, it is imperative that we do everything possible to maintain a safe kitchen. Meal preparation can be challenging and potentially dangerous. By maintaining a safe, well-designed kitchen, we can prolong the time we are able to be self-sufficient in the kitchen and retain our independence and self-assurance.

### **Ensuring a Safe Kitchen**

The following eight steps will help you prolong the time that you are able to be self-sufficient and safe in your kitchen.

1. Use proper lighting.
2. Use slip-resistant flooring.
3. Keep a fire extinguisher handy.
4. Keep electrical switches, plugs and lighting fixtures away from water sources and wet hands.
5. Consider appliance lock-out options.
6. Regulate water temperatures and water pressure.
7. Find a safe cook top.
8. Use the space safely.
  - a. Think about how traffic will flow through the kitchen and make sure no one will interfere with your space when you are cooking.
  - b. Locate microwaves 24" to 48" above the floor to avoid reaching to retrieve food.
  - c. Use slide-out trays and bins in base cabinets to make storage items more accessible so you don't have to bend.
  - d. Avoid sharp corners on the ends of countertops, especially islands and peninsulas, by having them rounded.



### **What is Best for You?**

How does your kitchen rate in each of these areas? If your house is not accessible, or your kitchen is not as safe as you want it to be, you may want to check with your county Extension agent, an occupational therapist, or contractor trained in building/remodeling with Universal Design to see what kitchen design, appliances, appliance placement, and kitchen gadgets would be best for you.