

Warning Signs That Care Is Needed

Sometimes people won't admit they need help to stay at home, and others may be unaware that it is time for some extra help to maintain a healthy and safe home environment. Knowing and watching for signs that could indicate extra assistance is needed may fall on family, friends or advisors. Take note of the following:

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- Yes No Has the elderly person changed eating habits?
 Yes No Has the elderly person lost weight?
 Yes No Is there food in the home?
 Yes No Does the person have the ability to go to the grocery store or are groceries delivered?

Did You Know? **Losing weight without trying could be a sign that something's wrong. For the elderly, weight loss could be related to many factors, including difficulty cooking, loss of taste or smell and underlying conditions.**

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- Yes No Is the elderly person taking care of his/her personal hygiene and dress?
 Yes No Are his/her clothes clean?
 Yes No Does he/she appear to be taking care of himself/herself?

Did You Know? **Failure to keep up with daily routines—such as bathing, tooth brushing and other basic grooming—could indicate health problems such as dementia, depression or physical impairments.**

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- Yes No Is the senior safe in his/her home?
 Yes No Has he/she fallen recently?
 Yes No Is he/she able to read directions on medication containers?
 Yes No Is there adequate lighting for nighttime trips to the bathroom?
 Yes No Has he/she had physical problems such as burns or injury marks resulting from general weakness, forgetfulness, or possible misuse of prescribed medications?
 Yes No Is the older person in good spirits?
 Yes No Is he/she unusually fatigued?
 Yes No Is he/she connecting with friends?
 Yes No If he/she is religious, does he/she attend regular worship services?
 Yes No Has he/she maintained interest in hobbies, social organizations and other daily activities?

Did You Know? **A drastically different mood or outlook could be a sign of depression or other health concern.**



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- Yes No Is the home being maintained in good order?
 Yes No Are the lights working?
 Yes No Is the heat on?
 Yes No Is the air conditioning in working order?
 Yes No Are the bathrooms clean?
 Yes No Is there clutter blocking walkways through the house?

Did You Know? **Any big changes in the way things are done around the house could provide clues to health. For example, scorched pots could mean forgetting about food cooking on the stove. Neglected housework could be a sign of depression, dementia, or other problems.**

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- Yes No Is the elderly person having difficulty getting around?
 Yes No Is he/she reluctant or unable to walk usual distances?
 Yes No Is knee or hip arthritis making it difficult to get around the house?
 Yes No Is he/she shuffling, or would he/she benefit from a cane or walker?

Did You Know? **Muscle weakness, joint problems and other age-related changes can make it difficult to move around. If he is unsteady on his feet, he may be at risk of falling—a major cause of disability among older adults.**

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- Yes No Has the person exhibited forgetfulness or inappropriate behavior?
 Yes No Is he/she unusually loud or quiet, paranoid, agitated, making phone calls at all hours?
 Yes No Has his/her forgetfulness resulted in unopened mail, piling newspapers, unfilled prescriptions or missed appointments?
 Yes No Has he/she mishandled finances such as not paying bills, losing money, paying bills twice or more, making unusual purchases or hiding money?
 Yes No Are multiple medications from multiple doctors being taken?

Did You Know? **Sometimes multiple doctors may be treating a person for multiple health conditions. Have multiple prescriptions evaluated by a medical doctor skilled in polypharmacy (the knowledge of how various medications interact).**

If any of these signs are noted and raise concerns, bring them to the attention of the person's physician and consider additional care in the home. San Diego Home Caregivers provides traditional and non-traditional in-home care offerings such as meal preparation, personal care, transportation and Alzheimer's care, whether the needs are daily, weekly, temporary or long-term.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Eldercare.gov