

Signs a Senior Needs Help at Home

By Marlo Sollitto

Admitting the need for help and accepting assistance is not easy for people as they age. The responsibility often falls on family members to recognize the signs that an aging loved one might need support with completing the activities of daily living.

How do you know if it is time for in-home care? Look for the red flags listed below.

Changes in Physical Function and Mental Status

- Difficulty keeping track of time
- Sleeping for most of the day
- Poor diet or weight loss
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Changes in mood or extreme mood swings
- Difficulty getting up from a seated position
- Difficulty with walking, balance and mobility
- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Marks or wear on walls, door jams, furniture and other items being used to help with stability while walking through the home
- Uncertainty and confusion when performing once-familiar tasks
- Forgetfulness, including forgetting to take medications or taking incorrect dosages
- Missing important appointments
- Consistent use of poor judgment (e.g. falling for scams or sales pitches, giving away money)

Poor Personal Hygiene

- Unpleasant body odor
- Infrequent showering or bathing
- A strong smell of urine in the house or on clothing
- Noticeable decline in grooming habits and personal care (e.g. unkempt hair, untrimmed nails, lack of oral care, wearing dirty or stained clothing)

Neglecting Household Responsibilities

- Inability to independently complete Instrumental ADLs
- Little or no fresh, healthy food in the fridge
- Dirty house and/or extreme clutter
- Dirty laundry piling up
- Stains or wet spots on furniture or carpet

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- Spoiled food that doesn't get thrown away
- Stacks of unopened mail or an overflowing mailbox
- Late payment notices, bounced checks and calls from bill collectors
- Utilities being turned off due to missed payments
- Unexplained dents and scratches on their car

Source: AgingCare.com

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