



Aging Signals Checklist

Most seniors fear losing their independence and having to leave their home. What most won't ask for is the kind of help that will keep them comfortable and safe. It's often up to the adult children of aging parents to look for the signs that their loved one needs help at home.

Neglecting those signs can lead to an unwanted dependence. A simple, list of signs can help children or friends identify the types of services their loved ones might need to stay safe and comfortable at home.

1. Look in refrigerator, freezer and shelves. Has food spoiled because he or she can't get to the grocery store? Does he or she have difficulty cleaning tight, cluttered places?
2. Review the grocery list. Has declining health prompted your loved one to purchase more convenience and junk foods, and neglect proper nutrition? Is she losing weight?
3. Look on top of furniture and countertops. Are dust and dirt signs that household tasks are becoming more difficult for your parents?
4. Look up at fans and ceilings. Has the inability to lift her arms and climb stepstools prevented your loved one from cleaning soot and grime from high places? Caution your senior not to climb.
5. Look down at floors and stairways. Have shaky hands spilled drinks and food, soiling vinyl, wood, carpets and walkways? Are frayed carpets, throw rugs, objects and furniture creating tripping hazards? Does dad's bad knee put him at greater risk on cracked sidewalks and with broken stair rails?
6. Look under beds and sofas. Is your senior having difficulty organizing old newspapers, books and magazines, which are creating a fire hazard?
7. Look through the mail. Is she forgetting to pay bills and answer correspondence?
8. Look below bathroom and kitchen sinks. Is poor eyesight making it difficult for your elderly relative to read medication labels and to properly store cleaning materials? Is he forgetting to refill medications and to take them on schedule? Check the refill date against the number of pills in the bottle to help determine if your loved one is taking medication regularly. Or call the pharmacy.
9. Look at your senior's appearance. Is clothing dirty and unkempt, and is your loved one neglecting personal hygiene?
10. Look to your parents' neighbors and other close friends to find out about their daily routine. Are your seniors at home more, watching television and avoiding stimulating conversation and companionship?