

# Signs It's Time for Assisted Living

## *Assessment Guide for Families*

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This guide helps you recognize key indicators that suggest your loved one may benefit from additional support and supervision. If you notice multiple signs across different categories, it may be time to explore assisted living options.

### Personal Care & Hygiene Challenges

- **Bathing issues:** Skipping baths, unable to bathe safely alone, or resisting help
- **Clothing and grooming:** Wearing the same clothes repeatedly, poor grooming, forgetting to change
- **Incontinence:** Accidents, difficulty managing toileting independently
- **Dressing difficulties:** Choosing inappropriate clothing for weather, unable to dress without help
- **Oral hygiene neglect:** Not brushing teeth, denture care issues

### Safety Concerns at Home

- **Falls:** History of falls, near misses, or unsteady gait
- **Medication errors:** Missing doses, taking wrong amounts, confusion about medications
- **Kitchen safety:** Leaving stove on, burning food, forgetting to eat
- **Wandering or getting lost:** Getting confused in familiar places
- **Home maintenance decline:** Clutter, spoiled food, utility disconnections

- **Scams or financial exploitation:** Vulnerable to fraud, giving money away

## Memory & Cognitive Changes

- **Forgetting important tasks:** Appointments, bills, taking medications
- **Confusion about time or place:** Getting lost, not knowing the date
- **Difficulty with familiar tasks:** Managing finances, using phone, following recipes
- **Repeating questions or stories:** Short-term memory loss
- **Poor judgment:** Wearing summer clothes in winter, trusting strangers

## Mobility & Physical Function

- **Difficulty walking:** Needing assistance to move around safely
- **Transfers becoming unsafe:** Getting in/out of bed, on/off toilet
- **Weakness or fatigue:** Unable to complete daily tasks
- **Chronic pain:** Limiting mobility and independence
- **Vision or hearing decline:** Impacting safety and function

## Social Isolation & Depression

- **Withdrawing from activities:** No longer participating in hobbies or social events
- **Loneliness:** Living alone with limited contact with others
- **Depression or anxiety:** Sad, anxious, or hopeless feelings
- **Loss of interest:** Not enjoying things they used to love
- **Lack of purpose:** No structure or routine to the day

## Nutrition & Meal Management

- **Weight loss:** Not eating enough or forgetting to eat
- **Poor food choices:** Eating only snacks or junk food
- **Unable to prepare meals:** Safety issues or lack of ability

- **Dehydration:** Not drinking enough fluids
- **Spoiled food in the house:** Not discarding old items

## Caregiver Stress & Burnout

- **Family caregiver exhaustion:** Burnout, health issues, unable to maintain care
- **Conflict between family members:** Disagreement about care needs
- **Employed caregivers calling out:** Unreliable or inadequate coverage
- **Guilt or resentment:** Caregiver feeling overwhelmed or resentful
- **Safety incidents:** Close calls or injuries due to caregiver stress

## Medical Complexity

- **Multiple chronic conditions:** Requiring coordination and monitoring
- **Recent hospitalization:** Discharge requiring higher level of support
- **Skilled nursing needs:** Wound care, injections, complex medication regimens
- **Behavioral health issues:** Agitation, aggression, sleep disturbances
- **Frequent ER visits:** Pattern of emergencies or crises

**Emergency Indicators:** If your loved one is experiencing frequent falls with injury, severe confusion or disorientation, significant weight loss, or repeated safety incidents, this may require immediate action. Contact your doctor or our team for urgent placement guidance.

## What to Do Next

- **Document concerns:** Keep a log of incidents, changes, or safety issues
- **Talk to their doctor:** Request a geriatric assessment or functional evaluation
- **Have a family meeting:** Discuss observations and options with all involved

- **Schedule a clinical assessment:** Get professional guidance on appropriate level of care
  - **Tour communities:** Visit assisted living options to understand what support looks like
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