



Senior Signals: When is it time to get involved?

Some common signals that additional help is advised:

Unopened mail piling up -Repeat financial notices may indicate missed paying bills.

Miss taking medications -Was it forgotten, or intentionally hidden?

-Only taking ½ a dose, or every other day, in order to save money

Unexplained dent or scratches on the car

Neglected grooming or hygiene

-Wearing the same clothes without laundering

Observing them unsteady on their feet

-If you notice bruising, was it from an unreported fall?

-Are they bringing laundry up a flight of stairs?

House is unclean, cluttered or has bad odors

Spoiled food in the refrigerator

-Are they losing weight (skipping meals)

-Eating mostly take out or microwave meals (high sodium)

But why hasn't Mom or Dad asked for any help?

- They may not wish to spend any money on additional care. The "Great generation" is known for their frugality.
- They may be in denial, or honestly do not recognize the possible risks and consequences.
- They may admit to some risks, but be unwilling to give up their familiar location, routines or independence in order to prevent something potentially dangerous.
- Or they may just be uncomfortable bringing up the topic, not wanting to inconvenience you, but would actually welcome the relief of more support.

What options are available for more support? Is going to the nursing home our only option?

- Initiate a daily phone call check in, or install video surveillance cameras so you can check in as often as you like for your peace of mind.
- Schedule weekly check-in visits from family, a housekeeper, a friend or neighbor. These people may verify medications, prepare meals, provide grocery delivery, clean the house, run the laundry . . .
- Initiate service for an emergency call button necklace. (\$30 average monthly fee)
- Hire an in-home caregiver from 2 hrs. up to 24 hrs. (Average cost is \$20 per hour through an agency. You can also hire a friend or reference privately and negotiate pricing from \$10 -\$20 per hour, but be advised to arrange appropriate taxes and insurance.)

- Move to an apartment in a senior community:
 - **Independent** - meals in a community dining room, call button (average of \$2,500 monthly)
 - **Assisted Living** – meals, help with dressing, showers, and medicines (averages between \$4,000 - \$5,000 monthly)
 - **Residential Care Home**, 5-10 residents sharing a private home with 24 hr. care staff (average between \$4,000 - \$5,000 monthly)
 - **Memory** community – secured, caregiver and nursing services, staff is trained for dementia or Alzheimer’s specific needs (average \$6,000 – \$8,000 monthly)
 - **Skilled Nursing Home** – daily nursing care, may be bedbound (average \$6,000 – \$8,000 monthly or paid for by Medicaid)
- **Hospice** - caregivers and nurses who come to the home or facility, 3-5x per week. Paid for by Medicare. Must have a Dr. order suspecting life expectancy of 6 months or less.

If you decide to keep waiting, please consider the risks soberly

- Many falls for seniors cause a debilitating injury (broken hip, arm, or wrist) that further limits their mobility.
- A stroke that is not treated immediately could cause permanent paralysis, or speech impairment.
- A heart attack without timely treatment could be fatal.
- A fall down stairs could be fatal.
- Waiting to be found after a fall, for a day or longer, could lead to dehydration, long term complications and even death.

Yes, implementing safety precautions does require additional energy or finances, and it may require giving up privacy or a change of routine or residence. But the risk of waiting too long could lead to an injury and regrets. Often elders will not initiate the safest decision for themselves, and it is vital for you to get involved and assist. Try to include your loved one in the research and decision making process as much as possible, to honor their wishes, and give them ownership of the decision. Securing their appropriate care and safety will be worth it!

If you would like to discuss your specific situation further, we would be glad to help!



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