



## **How To Tell When Care Is Needed**

Along with aging comes physical and often psychological changes that can challenge older adults and many times jeopardize their safety. The body as we age develops eventual limitations that make it hard to maintain a regular lifestyle. The various ailments that can accompany aging are always unwelcome and sometimes even denied. It's important that seniors have support in evaluating changes, limitations, abilities and options. Life is not static and living life to the fullest with dignity and independence often takes re-assessing and taking action in new directions.

There are practical objective signs that should signal a family member, a close friend or support system to investigate further into the possible need for assistance in the daily life of a senior. If the signs listed below are evident please consider consulting with a professional whether it is a doctor, elder advocate, social worker, local agency on aging, Alzheimer association, chaplain nurse, or case manager at local senior service agency.

It is often difficult for adult children of seniors to take the assertive role of evaluating and finding the best assistance to protect the health and well-being of their parents. It is a shift in the parent/child paradigm that's often disconcerting. Remember that a pound of prevention can be remarkable at averting more serious, complicated and often life threatening situations from arising. There are many resources available (National Family Caregivers Association, The Family Caregiver Alliance) to give support and encouragement to family caregivers.

### **The following warning signs may indicate that an older adult needs assistance.**

The cause of these changes can be a physical ailment such as arthritis, heart disease or deteriorating vision, a psychological problem such as depression or a developing memory disorder. If you recognize these red flags please consult a professional or call us at Reliant In-Home Care.

#### **Changes in Mobility:**

- \* Frequent falls
- \* Difficulty using a bathtub, shower or toilet
- \* Difficulty walking
- \* Difficulty using an assistance device such as a cane or walker
- \* Difficulty climbing stairs
- \* Difficulty getting out of chairs

### **Memory Impairment:**

- \* Leaving the stove, oven or iron on
- \* Forgetting to take medication
- \* Missing appointments
- \* Wandering from home and having difficulty getting back
- \* Forgetting names of close family members

### **Changes in Mood and Behavior:**

- \* Loss of interest in life
- \* Talk about feeling hopeless
- \* Mood swings
- \* Social isolation
- \* Lack of participation in regular activities as church, social groups and clubs
- \* Fear of going outside

### **Changes in Sleep Patterns:**

- \* Sleeping most of the day
- \* Inability to sleep
- \* Fitful or interrupted sleep

### **Changes in Diet:**

- \* Lack of food in the home: empty cupboards or refrigerator
- \* Inappropriate or unhealthy food or food that could worsen a medical condition
- \* Lack of appetite or overeating
- \* Noticeable weight gain or loss of weight

### **Changes in Physical Appearance:**

- \* Changes in habitual dress, such as remaining in pajamas or robe all day
- \* Unkempt appearance that is out of the norm
- \* Failure to maintain daily hygiene
- \* Wearing the same clothes many days in a row
- \* Abnormal skin color
- \* Swollen feet or ankles
- \* Unsteadiness in the person's gait
- \* Shortness of breath

**Changes in Household:**

- \* Large amounts of unopened mail
- \* Widespread clutter in the home of a habitually tidy person
- \* Failure to do laundry or other basic cleaning tasks

**Changes in Driving:**

- \* Getting into traffic accidents
- \* Frequent near misses, slowed reaction time
- \* Difficulty getting into or out of car
- \* Failure to see or heed traffic signals

Reliant In-Home Care provides FREE case assessments by our Care Manager.  
We are here to assist you!

760-231-1316



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