



## **TOP SIGNS YOUR PARENTS MAY NEED HELP AT HOME**

As your parents age, it can be difficult to determine when they might need extra assistance. According to the Research Center, approximately 52% of individuals with parents aged 65-74 and 64% of those with parents 75 and older help their parents with day-to-day needs. However, it's not always obvious when your parents may need more support than you can provide on your own. Recognizing the signs early can help you plan for the future and ensure your parents' safety, health, and quality of life.

## Do you notice any of the following signs with your parents?

### **1. The Yard and House Lack Upkeep**

If your parents' home, both inside and out, starts to show signs of neglect—overgrown grass, untrimmed bushes, or an accumulation of junk—it may indicate that maintaining their living environment has become overwhelming. This could be a signal that they need help with light housekeeping or yard work.

### **2. The Inside of the House Is Uncharacteristically Cluttered, Disorganized, or Dirty**

When a once tidy home becomes cluttered or dirty, it could mean that your parents are struggling to keep up with household chores, or they might not have the physical energy to clean and organize like they used to. This can affect their safety and comfort at home.

### **3. There's a Stack of Unpaid Bills**

If your parents seem to be falling behind on their bills or have forgotten to pay them, this could be a sign that they're having trouble managing finances. This could be due to memory issues, confusion, or simply being overwhelmed by the responsibility.

### **4. They Appear Disheveled or Have Declined Hygiene**

If your parents' clothing becomes unclean or they are neglecting personal hygiene (such as not bathing or brushing their teeth regularly), this might indicate that they need help with personal care. A decline in self-care is a common indicator that more assistance is required.

### **5. There's Hardly Any Food in the House**

A lack of groceries or consistently empty cupboards might suggest that your parents are unable to manage meal planning, grocery shopping, or cooking. Malnutrition can quickly become a serious health issue if they're not eating regularly or nutritionally balanced meals.

### **6. There Has Been a Change in Their General Mood or Loss of Interest in Activities**

A shift in your parents' mood—such as increased irritability, sadness, or disinterest in activities they once enjoyed—can be a sign of depression, dementia, or a general decline in health. This emotional shift may also be linked to a lack of social interaction or a growing feeling of isolation.

## **7. They Forget to Take Medications or Get Prescriptions Filled**

If your parents are missing doses of their medication or forgetting to pick up prescriptions, this could put their health at risk. Medication management can become a challenge as we age, and assistance with reminders or organizing medications may be necessary.

## **8. They Have Unexplained Bruising or Falls**

Frequent falls or unexplained bruising are red flags that your parents may not be as stable on their feet as they once were. This could signal balance issues or increased risk for serious injury. Regular assistance with mobility may be necessary to prevent further falls.

## **9. They Are Becoming More Forgetful, Missing Appointments**

Forgetting appointments, social events, or even simple tasks they used to handle can be an early sign of memory loss or cognitive decline. If this is happening more often, it might be time to consider professional help or a daily care routine.

## **10. They Have Noticeably Gained or Lost Weight**

Sudden or unexplained weight changes can indicate that your parents are not eating properly, are forgetting to eat, or have underlying health issues. Significant weight loss or gain should be addressed as it can lead to other health complications.

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### **Getting Ready for “The Talk”**

Starting the conversation with your parents about the need for extra help can be one of the most difficult discussions you'll face. Just like the awkward conversation many of us had about “the birds and the bees,” the conversation about caregiving can feel uncomfortable. Your parents may feel they're losing their independence or becoming a burden, while you want to ensure they're safe and well-cared for. Here's how to ease into the conversation:

#### **1. Lead with Love:**

Frame the conversation around your concern for their health and well-being. For example, saying something like, “I love and respect you, and I want to help make sure you continue to thrive in the home you love,” can open the door to a positive, collaborative discussion.

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