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OPINION

Is it time to consider assisted living for a loved one?

What Arizonans should know before making the difficult decision to place someone in a facility

Posted Friday, May 15, 2026 3:00 pm



Alicia M. Brown, ASB, LPN
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indicator they need help. Missed medication doses or confusion about prescriptions can quickly become dangerous.

Frequent falls or safety concerns

Unexplained bruises, recent falls or difficulty moving around the home safely are important factors to consider. Other safety concerns may include forgetting that the stove is on, wandering or forgetting to lock doors.

By Alicia M. Brown, ASB, LPN | Glendale

OPINION — Arizona is a haven for retirees. With over 300 sunny days per year, why not spend your golden years enjoying golf and pickle ball as opposed to shoveling your driveway?

Maybe your senior loved one lives near you, perhaps they live in another state. Regardless, aging can come with challenges, and one of the most difficult decisions of all, when is it time to consider assisted living for that loved one?

What if your loved one is younger, the survivor of a traumatic brain injury, stroke, work accident, fall or other event that left them with injuries that make it difficult for them to care for themselves or raise concerns about them living safely on their own? What if dad lacks insight into his needs and thinks he is still able to live alone?

Deciding when to consider assisted living can feel quite heavy, but there are some clear patterns that often signal it might be time to look at 24/7 residential care. It's rarely just one issue — it's usually a combination that starts affecting safety, health or quality of life. Here's are several things to look for and consider:

Daily living is becoming difficult

If your loved one struggles with basic activities like bathing, dressing, cooking or medication management, that's a strong

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Noticeable cognitive decline

Memory loss that disrupts daily life — missing appointments, repeating questions or getting lost in familiar place — can point to cognitive impairment like Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia where structured support, a secured environment and a staff trained in memory care becomes important.

Decline in personal hygiene or living conditions

If you are seeing unwashed clothes, poor grooming, spoiled food in the refrigerator, or notice that a once-tidy home is becoming cluttered or unsafe, it indicates a loved one may be struggling to keep up or doesn't realize that their living conditions have deteriorated.

Isolation or depression

Withdrawing from hobbies, avoiding social interaction or showing signs of depression can worsen overall health. Assisted living often provides built-in social opportunities and structure.

Caregiver stress is increasing

If you or another caregiver are feeling overwhelmed, exhausted or unable to keep up, that's not something to ignore. Burnout can affect everyone.



Health needs are increasing

Frequent hospital visits, worsening chronic conditions or needing regular medical monitoring may require more consistent care than can be provided at home.

I recommend that caregivers or another family member accompanying a loved one on a visit to the ER or hospital take that opportunity to tell medical providers what you're seeing and asking what resources might be best.

Sometimes visiting home health or in-home companions

are enough to deliver the care needed, sometimes the safest option is a move to residential care.

Alicia M. Brown, ASB, LPN works in the brain injury and memory care field. Please submit comments at yourvalley.net/letters or email them to AzOpinions@iniusa.org. We are committed to publishing a wide variety of reader opinions, as long as they meet our [Civility Guidelines](#).