

Warning Signs That Care is Needed

Sometimes people won't admit they need help to stay at home, and others may be unaware that it is time for some extra help to maintain a healthy and safe home environment. Knowing and watching for signs that could indicate extra assistance is needed may fall on family, friends or advisors. Take note of the following:

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has the elderly person changed eating habits?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has the elderly person lost weight?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is there food in the home?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Does the person have the ability to go to the grocery store or are groceries delivered?

Did You Know? **Losing weight without trying could be a sign that something's wrong. For the elderly, weight loss could be related to many factors, including difficulty cooking, loss of taste or small, underlying conditions.**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the elderly person taking care of his/her personal hygiene and dress?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are his/her clothes clean?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Does he/she appear to be taking care of himself/herself?

Did You Know? **Failure to keep up with daily routines—such as bathing, tooth brushing, and other basic grooming—could indicate health problems such as dementia, depression, or physical impairments.**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the senior safe in his/her home?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has he/she fallen recently?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she able to read directions on medication containers?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is there adequate lighting for nighttime trips to the bathroom?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has he/she had physical problems such as burns or injury marks resulting from general weakness, forgetfulness or possible misuse of prescribed medications?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the older person in good spirits?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she unusually fatigued?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she connecting with friends?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No If he/she is religious, does he/she attend regular worship services?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has he/she maintained interest in hobbies, social organizations and other daily activities?

Did You Know? **A drastically different mood or outlook could be a sign of depression or other health concern.**

CAREWORKS
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- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the home being maintained in good order?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are the lights working?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the heat on?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the air conditioning in working order?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are the bathrooms clean?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is there clutter blocking walkways through the house?

Did You Know? **Any big changes in the way things are done around the house could provide clues to health. For example, scorched pots could mean forgetting about food cooking on the stove. Neglected housework could be a sign of depression, dementia or other problems.**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is the elderly person having difficulty getting around?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she reluctant or unable to walk usual distances?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is knee or hip arthritis making it difficult to get around the house?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she shuffling, or would he/she benefit from a cane or walker?

Did You Know? **Muscle weakness, joint problems and other age-related changes can make it difficult to move around. If he is unsteady on his feet, he may be at risk of falling—a major cause of disability among older adults.**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has the person exhibited forgetfulness or inappropriate behavior?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Is he/she unusually loud or quiet, paranoid, agitated, making phone calls at all hours?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has his/her forgetfulness resulted in unopened mail, piling newspapers, unfilled prescriptions, or missed appointments?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Has he/she mishandled finances such as not paying bills, losing money, paying bills twice or more, making unusual purchases or hiding money?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No Are multiple medications from multiple doctors being taken?

Did You Know? **Sometimes multiple doctors may be treating a person for multiple health conditions. Have multiple prescriptions evaluated by a medical doctor skilled in polypharmacy (the knowledge of how various medications interact).**

If any of these signs are noted and raise concerns, bring them to the attention of the person's physician and consider additional care in the home. **CareWorks Health Services** provides traditional and non-traditional in-home care offerings such as meal preparation, personal care, transportation and Alzheimer's care, whether the needs are daily, weekly, temporary or long-term.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Eldercare.gov