



Is assisted living right for you or your loved one?

Normal aging, an injury, or illness can quickly turn an independent senior into a person who requires some degree of regular help in the home. This realization can be difficult or unpleasant to accept, which can compound problems with daily activities, safety, nutrition, and transportation.

Ability, not age, is the best method for judging if one could benefit from moving into an assisted living community. Certain changes in the ability to cope with the ordinary demands of life could signal that help may be needed now to avoid a future crisis. Here is a list of the ten most common warning signs that someone you know could benefit from assisted living.

- ☑ **Difficulty doing basic tasks** such as walking, dressing, eating, and cooking.
- ☑ **Poor cognitive skills**, including difficulty answering questions or the inability to remember familiar names and places.
- ☑ **Poor hygiene**, such as infrequent bathing and sloppy appearance. Some seniors may be too weak to groom themselves as they normally would or perhaps they are not able to see well enough to do so.
- ☑ **Failure to fulfill responsibilities**, such as opening mail, paying bills, or balancing check books.
- ☑ **Change in eating habits**. Empty cupboards and refrigerators, stopping cooking, and weight loss are indicators that an individual may not have the energy to shop and prepare meals, has had a loss of appetite, or that there are underlying health issues.
- ☑ **Changes in health**. Weight loss, inability to control the bladder, significant vision or hearing loss, or marked changes in appetite all point to underlying health issues that may require help.
- ☑ **Increasing isolation**. Loss of interest in friendships, activities, and hobbies, withdrawing into solitude, or avoiding the outside world by keeping the curtains drawn night and day may signal the need for companionship and help with identifying and coping with physical or mental health issues.
- ☑ **Changes in attitude**. Talk of being depressed, being unusually argumentative or uncooperative, or appearing paranoid are causes for concern.
- ☑ **Deterioration in housekeeping**. Stains on floors, carpets and furniture indicate that a person is dropping or spilling things, which can indicate muscle weakness or movement problems. Scorched pots may be due to memory lapses.
- ☑ **Safety concerns**. Leaving the house unlocked, forgetting to turn off lights and appliances, and causing other threats to personal safety in the home and yard may signify that an individual may no longer be able to cope with living alone.