



## How to Recognize It's Time for More Help

One of the most difficult decisions an adult child may have to face is discerning when mom or dad can no longer live safely and independently at home. As much as we dislike having to acknowledge the aging process, especially



in our loved one's lives, the safety and well-being of our loved ones needs to be viewed objectively. It's difficult for older adults to admit that they need more help. Often, they can easily excuse signs that they need more help by brushing the topic under the rug. Most older parents don't want to be a burden to their adult children. After all, they are used to being the caretakers of the family. When roles need to reverse, adult children are often at a crossroads as to what's the next step for mom or dad. Siblings can disagree about what's best, adding more complexity to the situation. Financial strains can add pressure to the family, causing one family member to step in as the family caregiver. Although every situation is different, here are five signs to look for when faced with the question, is it time for more help?

### Personal Hygiene

One of the first noticeable signs that it's time for more help is clear changes in mom or dad's personal hygiene habits. Do they look less put together than usual? Perhaps you've noticed unpleasant odors, such as body odor or strong smells of urine, either on clothing or furniture. When was the last time mom or dad had a bath or shower? Scan your parents for other disheveled grooming habits, such as unkempt hair, untrimmed nails, an unshaven face, or insufficient oral care.

### Untidy Home

An untidy home, especially if mom or dad always kept the home looking spotless, is another sign that mom or dad need more help. Look for signs of neglected household responsibilities. Are the dishes piling up in the kitchen sink? Is the trash overflowing? Is the laundry piling up? Is the house somewhat clean, or is there a buildup of dust, unswept floors, dirty bathrooms, or stains on carpet or furniture? Keep an eye out for stacks of unopened mail or dirty dishes returned to cabinets. Also peek in the refrigerator, looking for expired or spoiled food.

### Mishandled Finances

A quick glance at your parents' checkbook activity can indicate that they need more assistance. Take note of multiple mathematical errors, transposed numbers, missing check entries, or written checks that never made it to their recipient. Are your parents up-to-date on their bills? Look for unopened bills laying around or past due notices. It is important to remember that if mom or dad could never balance their checkbook—perhaps one spouse took on that responsibility—then this may not be a sign it's time for more help. Look for the other indicators of mishandled finances.

## **Decline in Mobility or Memory**

Another apparent sign that it's time for more help is a noticeable decline in your aging parents' physical mobility or more frequent memory lapses. Is mom or dad having difficulty getting up and down from a seated position? Are they avoiding stairs and choosing to sleep in the living room? Have they had a recent fall, or are falls becoming more and more common? Pay attention to how mom or dad walk—do they shuffle their feet instead of lifting them and are they holding on to furniture to get from room to room instead of walking freely? Have you noticed changes in their vision or hearing? Finally, have you noticed lapses in their memory or judgement? If any of these signs are present, it is time to intervene for your loved one's safety and well-being.

## **Social Withdrawal**

Finally, another sign that it may be time for more help is when mom or dad begins to withdraw from their social obligations. Learn your parents' social habits now, such as hair appointments, usual get togethers with friends, volunteer work, or activities they attend at a senior center, library, or church. Then, take note of how often they get out of the home. When they begin to stay home more and more often, and it's not because they aren't feeling well or the weather is bad, it may be a sign that they need more assistance.

At [Visiting Angels Fort Worth](#), we understand the many challenges adult children face when caring for their aging parents. You do not have to navigate this care journey alone. Our office is ready to meet with you to discuss your situation. We then work together to create an individualized plan of care, custom to the needs of your loved one. Whether your loved one needs basic housekeeping or companion care, or needs assistance with errands or basic hygiene care, Visiting Angels is here to help. [Give us a call](#) to set up your free in-home assessment and consultation appointment today.

Visiting Angels of Fort Worth, TX

817-877-1616

<http://www.visitingangels.com/fortworth/home>

<https://www.facebook.com/visitingangelsftw>