



# 10 WARNING SIGNS

## Your Parent Needs Help At Home



**HOME CARE**  
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*Better Solutions for Aging Well in New Orleans*



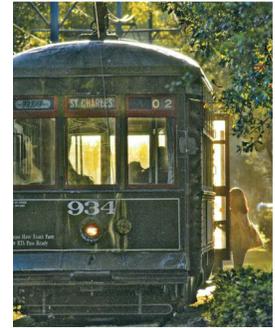
Determining the care needs of a loved one is a very important role and can be challenging for family members. Whether you live nearby and can visit often, or live out of town and rely on telephone conversations and occasional visits, it can be difficult to get a clear picture of changes that may be significant. Often, admitting they need help and accepting assistance is not easy for people as they age. Parents often deny they need help in their struggle to maintain their independence. Understanding what to look for and what questions to ask is the first step to recognizing that an aging parent may need help with daily living tasks.



*Here are some signs that may indicate your parent needs help at home:*

- 1 Messy home** – An unkempt home or clutter beyond what would be a normal pattern is often a telltale sign of needing assistance. This can include a strong smell of urine, piled-up garbage, undone or unfolded laundry, dirty dishes, or stacks of unopened mail or an overflowing mailbox .
- 2 Noticeable decline in grooming habits and personal care** – Lack of personal hygiene can be a red flag for a number of other issues, including declining attention and memory, depression, untreated injuries, etc. Signs to look for are refusing to bathe, body odor, disheveled hair, unwashed clothing, and clothing that is unsuitable for the weather.
- 3 Changes in eating habits and nutrition** – In the kitchen, look for items stored in cupboards and in the fridge – is there spoiled food, a scarcity of healthy foods, or little food at all? Look for signs of loss of appetite, difficulty obtaining food or preparing meals, eating snacks rather than having balanced meals.
- 4 Dramatic weight loss or weight gain** – A noticeable change in weight (typically, a fluctuation of 10% or more in body weight) can be a red flag for an underlying medical problem or emotional issue such as depression. Having a medical evaluation could help rule out a medical cause; look for other barriers which may contribute to the weight loss or weight gain. Having support for eating regular, nutritious meals can help turn around unhealthy trends in body weight.
- 5 Isolation** – Withdrawing from friendships or a dropping off in usual socializing with others may indicate troublesome changes in mood or mental functioning. Look for loss of interest in hobbies or activities, changes in mood or extreme mood swings. Once-familiar tasks can become more and more difficult or confusing. Common reactions to this feeling are to withdraw from loved ones and the community, and to limit activities outside the home.
- 6 Frequent falls and mishaps** – Difficulty with walking, balance and mobility frequently leads to a pattern of falls and related injuries and loss of independence. Noticing changes in mobility and addressing them as soon as they arise can dramatically reduce the risk of falls and life-changing injuries. Support and supervision in the home can help to significantly limit these risks.

- 7 Medication errors or mix-ups** – Forgetting to take medicines, taking more than the prescribed dosage or having confusion about how to take multiple medicines are common problems leading to health complications. Difficulty with medication compliance is a call for assistance and support.
- 8 Driving problems** – While many seniors are extremely reluctant to give up driving privileges, frequent tickets, accidents or scratches on the vehicle are signs that they may no longer be safe to drive.
- 9 Forgetfulness and/or questionable judgement** – Forgetting to pay bills or difficulty keeping finances in order; misplacing familiar items and finding them in unusual places (e.g. wallet in the freezer); losing track of date and time are all signs that a person needs additional assistance and may not be safe alone.
- 10 Diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimers Disease** – Short-term memory loss, confusion and a diminished ability to stay organized can be early symptoms of dementia or Alzheimer’s Disease. Evaluation and accurate diagnosis are important steps for planning the on-going care of a loved one. Safety at home becomes an important issue to clearly assess and address by adding care and supervision. Often, part-time caregiver help early-on may be adequate to provide for daily needs and support independence.



## Balancing Needs

The next step beyond determining the care needs of a loved one, is determining how those care needs are going to be met. If you are a family caregiver currently supporting an aging parent, it is important that you honestly assess your own needs and ability to help as well. It is easy to neglect your own needs and well-being, but inevitable that you find win-win solutions that protect the quality of life of both your aging parent and yourself.

If you’re considering how best to meet the needs of your loved one and looking for ways to find reprieve from the overwhelming responsibilities of elder care, Home Care Solutions is here to help.

Once you’ve identified that your loved one needs additional support in the home, hiring a professionally trained caregiver through Home Care Solutions can be the perfect solution for your Mom or Dad. A wonderful starting point is our introductory consultation with a Care Manager who can guide you through next steps, help create a plan to engage appropriate services, and answer your important elder care questions.

Serving New Orleans families since 1991, we are experts in aging well. An independent, locally-owned company specializing in in-home and Alzheimer’s care, our comprehensive approach includes assessment, family consultations, caregiver availability 24/7 and peace of mind.

## *To meet the needs of your loved ones, meet the caring professionals at Home Care Solutions!*



Give us a call at  
**504.828.0900**  
 Find details online at  
**[www.HomeCareNewOrleans.com](http://www.HomeCareNewOrleans.com)**

