



## 10- Warning Signs An Older Loved One May Need Assistance

Changes in physical and mental abilities that may occur with age can be difficult to detect—for older adults and their family members, friends, and caregivers too. To help in determining when an older adult may need assistance in the home, the Eldercare Locator has compiled a list of 10 warning signs. Any one of the following behaviors may indicate the need to take action. It is also important to inform the older adult's physician of these physical or psychological behavior changes.

### HAS YOUR LOVED ONE:

- Changed eating habits, resulting in losing weight, having no appetite, or missing meals?
- Neglected personal hygiene, including wearing dirty clothes and having body odor, bad breath, neglected nails and teeth, or sores on the skin?
- Neglected their home, with a noticeable change in cleanliness and sanitation?
- Exhibited inappropriate behavior, such as being unusually loud, quiet, paranoid, or agitated, or making phone calls at all hours?
- Changed relationship patterns, causing friends and neighbors to express concerns?
- Had physical problems, such as burns or injury marks, which may result from general weakness, forgetfulness, or misuse of alcohol or prescribed medications?
- Decreased or stopped participating in activities that were once important to them, such as bridge or a book club, dining with friends, or attending religious services?
- Exhibited forgetfulness, resulting in unopened mail, piling of newspapers, not filling their prescriptions, or missing appointments?
- Mishandled finances, such as not paying bills, losing money, paying bills twice or more, or hiding money?
- Made unusual purchases, such as buying more than one subscription to the same magazine, entering an unusually large number of contests, or increasing purchases from television advertisements?
- Through the Eldercare Locator, older adults and their loved ones can get connected with information on local aging resources that offer assistance for aging in place, enabling older adults to continue living independently in their homes and communities.
- For additional information on programs and services for older adults and their caregivers in your area, contact the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116 or [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

**For more information about ACL**  
U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services, Administration for Community  
Living, Washington DC 20201  
Phone: (202) 619 – 0727  
Fax: (202) 357 – 3555  
Email: [ACLinfo@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ACLinfo@acl.hhs.gov)  
Web: <http://www.aoa.gov>