



# CommCare Corporation

## 10 Signs Your Elderly Parent May Need Help

### 1. Mail and bills are left to pile up.

When the simple tasks of opening and filing mail, paying bills on time or managing a checking account become overwhelming, loved ones should become concerned.

### 2. The house is cluttered or unkempt.

The lack of interest should be of special concern if a parent has always been neat and orderly.

### 3. Food in the refrigerator is uneaten or spoiled.

When shopping, cooking, and cleaning become too much trouble, a parent may be eating just enough to get by, but suffer nutritionally. Weight loss can be another sign that a parent is not eating a nutritious diet.

### 4. Signs of scorching on the bottoms of pots and pans.

A result of short-term memory loss, scorched pans can be a dangerous sign that parents are forgetting about pots left on the stove, causing a fire hazard, and threatening both the parent and neighbor's safety.

### 5. Declining personal hygiene.

Signs like unkempt hair, dirty or lengthy nails, poor oral hygiene, body or urine odor, an unshaven face or wearing the same clothes over and over could indicate mobility or cognition problems, depression or fear of falling in the tub or shower.

*Source: Elder Options of Texas*

## Recognizing Signs

As aging parents face medical, cognitive or mobility issues, questions about their physical, social and psychological well-being often arise. So how do children recognize when a parent's needs have changed and they need additional support?

Loved ones should look for changes in a parent's attitude or behavior— changes often undetectable over the telephone. This list contains clear warning signs that some type of intervention is needed.

Once adult children decide that a parent needs help or assistance, the next step is to determine the most appropriate type.

The goal should be to identify the most appropriate support system that meets the needs of the parent, while helping to attain or maintain their highest level of function and ability.

Support services can make a difference to an older adult; however, resistance to any kind of change is common especially among seniors. Often an objective third party, like a doctor, minister or care manager, can make a transition easier.

See the next page for more signs as well as solutions.



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## 6. Missed doctor's appointments.

The reasons for missed doctor's appointments could range from memory loss to lack of transportation or not knowing how to access ride options.

## 7. Getting in and out of the home is becoming difficult.

When a parent has difficulty navigating stairs, is unsteady on level ground or is complaining of dizziness, then falls are either likely or have already occurred

## 8. Forgetting to take medication.

Neglecting to take medications may be a sign of short-term memory loss or depression; however, this is not just a quality of life issue, but a real health risk factor.

## 9. Inappropriate behavior, clothing or speech.

Neighbors or friends may share their observations that a parent is not dressing appropriately for the weather, for instance --a sign that he or she might be confused.

## 10. Neglecting necessary household repairs & maintenance.

An overgrown lawn, piled up trash can lead to fall hazards or disease, while failing to retrieve mail can result in interruption of necessary services.

*Source: Elder Options of Texas*

## Seeking Solutions

Solutions can range from basic services like home safety modifications, emergency response services and meal delivery to intermediate services such as adult day care or psychiatric counseling,

Advanced services may include in-home care services, assisted living or skilled nursing or rehabilitation care. And while the need for advanced services may be long term for some, others may use advanced services to gain function and ability or learn adaptive techniques in order to return to the home.

Our professionals can help families through this process.

*We offer:*

**Nursing Services**

**Rehabilitation**

**Social Services**

**Nutritional Support**

**Activities**

**Physician &  
Pharmacist  
Consultation**