Signs an Aging Parent May Need More Help Checklist

Observe changes · compare notes · plan the conversation

A practical caregiver tool for noticing changes without jumping to conclusions, documenting patterns, and deciding what deserves a closer look.

A free resource from

The Caregiving Concierge™

by AdVantage Digital LLC

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Home · routine · mobility

An observation checklist for noticing changes, comparing notes with family, and deciding what deserves a closer look.

This tool is intentionally written around what you observe, not what you should conclude. One item by itself does not prove that someone needs a particular type of care. Look for patterns, changes from the person's usual baseline, and problems that affect safety or daily life.

THIS CHECKLIST IS FOR (NAME) _____

PERSON COMPLETING CHECKLIST _____

DATE OBSERVED _____

LAST VISIT / COMPARISON DATE _____

1 HOME & EVERYDAY ROUTINES

- ☐ The home is noticeably more cluttered, dirty, or difficult to navigate than usual.
- ☐ Mail, laundry, dishes, trash, or household tasks are piling up.
- ☐ Food is spoiled, very limited, or the kitchen is being used differently than before.
- ☐ Repairs or safety problems are going unaddressed.
- ☐ The person seems to be having more difficulty using appliances, phones, remotes, or other familiar items.

2 PERSONAL CARE & MOBILITY

- ☐ Clothing, grooming, bathing, or oral care appears different from the person's usual routine.
- ☐ Getting up from a chair, walking, using stairs, or getting in/out of bed looks more difficult.
- ☐ There are new bruises, falls, near-falls, or increased fear of falling.
- ☐ A cane, walker, hearing aid, glasses, or other equipment is not being used as expected or no longer seems adequate.

3 FOOD, MEDICATIONS & HEALTH FOLLOW-THROUGH

- ☐ Meals are being skipped, weight seems to be changing, or hydration appears to be a concern.
- ☐ Medication bottles, pill organizers, or refill timing suggest doses may be missed, duplicated, or confused.
- ☐ Appointments are being missed, forgotten, or harder to coordinate.
- ☐ New symptoms or changes have been mentioned but not communicated to the care team.

4 MEMORY, JUDGMENT & COMMUNICATION

- ☐ The same questions or stories are repeated more often than before.
- ☐ There is new difficulty following familiar steps, managing dates, or keeping track of plans.
- ☐ Bills, purchases, scams, or financial decisions seem unusually confusing or risky.
- ☐ The person seems more withdrawn, anxious, irritable, suspicious, or different from their usual behavior.
- ☐ Driving, cooking, medication use, or other safety-sensitive activities now raise concerns.

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Health follow-through · memory · support

5 SOCIAL CONNECTION & CAREGIVER STRAIN

- ☐ The person is seeing friends, family, neighbors, faith/community groups, or usual activities less often.
- ☐ A spouse or family caregiver seems exhausted, overwhelmed, or unable to keep up with the current level of care.
- ☐ Family members are giving conflicting reports about what is happening because no one is sharing notes.

+ WHAT CHANGED? COMPARE OBSERVATIONS, NOT CONCLUSIONS

OBSERVATION	NEW / WORSE?	HOW OFTEN?	WHO ELSE NOTICED?	NEXT STEP

A useful next step: Choose the three changes that concern you most and bring concrete examples to the person, family, or appropriate professional. “I noticed three missed appointments this month” is easier to discuss than “You cannot manage anymore.”

+ QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE NEXT CONVERSATION

QUESTION / CONCERN	WHO SHOULD WE ASK?	ANSWER / FOLLOW-UP

You're doing the hard, invisible work. Caregiving often starts with a feeling that “something is different.” Writing down concrete observations can turn that feeling into a calmer, more useful conversation.

Everything about your loved one's care, organized in one place.

The Caregiving Concierge™ helps families organize appointments, providers, medications, documents, schedules, and other important care information in one secure workspace.



Sources informing this resource
National Institute on Aging: Caregiving FAQs and Aging in Place guidance; National Institute on Aging: Caregiver Worksheets and home-safety resources.