

Ten Warning Signs: Your Older Family Member May Need Help

For many Americans, the Holiday season is one of the few times during the year that adults and their older loved ones spend quality time together. The Holidays may be a time when families face and discuss the difficult decisions about finding care for their older relative. The Eldercare Locator has produced a guide of “10 warning signs” to help families and older Americans determine if help is needed. Any one of the behaviors listed may or may not indicate that an action should be taken and your family member’s physician should be kept informed of physical or psychological behavior changes.

Has your family member:

- Changed eating habits within the last year resulting in weight loss, having no appetite, or missed meals?
- Neglected personal hygiene resulting in wearing dirty clothes, body odor, bad breath, neglected nails and teeth, sores on the skin?
- Neglected their home so it is not as clean or sanitary as you remember growing up?
- Exhibited inappropriate behavior by being unusually loud or quiet, paranoid, agitated, making phone calls at all hours?
- Changed relationship patterns such that friends and neighbors have expressed concerns?
- Had physical problems such as burns or injury marks resulting from general weakness, forgetfulness, or possible misuse of alcohol or prescribed medications?
- Decreased or stopped participating in activities that were previously important to them such as bridge or a book club, dining with friends, or attending religious services?
- Exhibited forgetfulness resulting in unopened mail, piling newspapers, not filling their prescriptions, or missed 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 magazine subscription of the same magazine, entered an unusual amount of contests, increased usage of purchasing from television advertisements?

Through the Eldercare Locator, individuals and their families can get information on services available through the state and area agencies on aging and local aging service providers.

To access services, contact the Eldercare Locator at
800-677-1116
or through the Web site at
www.eldercare.gov