

# Independence at Home

Red Flags That An Older  
Adult Needs Help



# Possible Changes With Aging

- Physical changes
  - Eyes & ears
  - Decline in strength & mobility
  - Forgetfulness
- Functional changes
  - More help with daily living activities
  - Falls risk
  - Nutrition risk

National Institute of Health. (2007). Medline Plus. 8 Areas of Age-Related Change. Available at: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter07/articles/winter07pg10-13.html>  
Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing.(2012). *Age-Related Changes in Health*. Available at: [http://consultgerim.org/topics/normal\\_aging\\_changes/want\\_to\\_know\\_more](http://consultgerim.org/topics/normal_aging_changes/want_to_know_more)

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# Red Flags: Physical Signs

- Physical signs
  - Recent accident, falls or close calls
  - Slow recovery or a chronic condition that is worsening
  - Changes in eating habits, noticeable weight loss or weight gain
  - Neglected personal hygiene, dirty clothes, body odor, bad breath, neglected nails and teeth, sores on their skin



# Red Flags: Physical Signs

- Physical signs
  - Seeming more frail
  - Inappropriate behavior, making phone calls at all hours, unusually loud, quiet, agitated
  - Physical problems like injury marks or burns from falls, forgetfulness, abuse, alcohol or drug abuse





# More Red Flags: Social Signs

- Social signs
  - Cutting back on activities and interests that were once important, such as clubs or attending religious services
  - Days spent without leaving the house
  - Changed relationships with friends and family, causing neighbors and friends to express concerns



Scott P. (2014) 11 Signs It Might Be Time for Assisted Living. Available at <http://www.caring.com/articles/moving-out-relative-question>

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# More Red Flags: Financial Signs

- Financial
  - Piles of mail in various places
  - Unopened personal mail & bills
  - Crisp unread magazines
  - Mishandled finances like losing money, paying bills twice, hiding money
  - Making unusual purchases



# More Red Flags

- Kitchen signs
  - Stale or expired food
  - Broken appliances
  - Signs of fire
  - Multiples of the same item on the counter



# And More Red Flags

- Home maintenance signs
  - Clutter
  - Things are dirty, grimy
  - Signs of neglect
  - Plants that are dying or dead
  - Pets that don't seem well tended
  - Newspapers in the bushes





# Results in Staying at Care Facility

- Inability to perform activities of daily living & other functions:
  - Bathing, dressing/undressing, eating, walking, transferring bed/chair, using the toilet, preparing meals, using the phone, managing money
- Cognitive decline
- Unsafe environment; falls



Taylor, DH, Osterman, J, et al.(2005) Do Seniors Understand Their Risk of Moving to a Nursing Home? *Health Serv Res*; 40(3): 811–828.

Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1361169/>.

Rackner, V. (2012) *What Are the Predictors of Nursing Home Admission?* Emeritus Senior Living.

Available at: <https://www.emeritus.com/elder-care-resources/faq/what-are-the-predictors-of-nursing-home-admission>

The Peter Rabins Alzheimer's Family Support Center. *The Nursing Home Decision*. Johns Hopkins Medicine.

Available at: [http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/psychiatry/specialty\\_areas/memory\\_center/rabins\\_alzheimers/transcripts/script\\_nursing.pdf](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/psychiatry/specialty_areas/memory_center/rabins_alzheimers/transcripts/script_nursing.pdf)



# Staying in a Care Facility

- Medication mismanagement
- Unmanaged health issues; declining health
- Mental health concerns
- Living alone; no support; incapable caregiver



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# Questions?

