Is Your Parent Safe Living Alone?

The 10-point checklist to quietly work through on your next visit.

Most warning signs don't show up on a phone call. "I'm fine, dear" can cover a lot. On your next visit, give yourself 20 minutes to look around with fresh eyes. You're not inspecting your parent. You're looking for small changes, so you can help early, while they're still easy to fix.

☐ 1. The fridge and pantry

- Expired or spoiled food, or a nearly empty fridge
- The same few items eaten over and over
- Clothes fitting more loosely than last time

If you see it: Skipped meals often come before weakness and falls. Try a grocery delivery order, batch-cooked meals, or Meals on Wheels.

☐ 2. Medications

- A pill organizer that doesn't match today's day
- Bottles that are fuller (or emptier) than they should be
- Expired prescriptions, or the same drug from two pharmacies

If you see it: Ask their pharmacist for a free medication review, and ask about blister packs that are sorted by day.

☐ 3. Mail and bills

- Stacks of unopened mail or late-payment notices
- New "charities," sweepstakes, or prize letters
- Unusual charges or cash withdrawals

If you see it: Money trouble is often the first sign of memory changes, and scammers target older adults. Offer to set up autopay and bank alerts together.

☐ 4. Trip and fall hazards

- Loose rugs, cords, or clutter in walkways
- Dim hallways, or no night-light on the way to the bathroom
- No grab bars by the toilet or tub, or loose stair railings

If you see it: About 1 in 4 adults over 65 falls each year (CDC). Most fixes cost little: rug tape, night-lights, and grab bars.

☐ 5. How they move

- New bruises they can't explain
- Holding on to furniture or walls to get around
- Pushing up with both arms to get out of a chair

If you see it: Mention it to their doctor. Physical therapy and balance classes really do reduce falls.

☐ 6. The house and personal care

- Laundry, dishes, or trash piling up beyond what's normal for them
- Wearing the same clothes, or skipping showers
- Signs of a burned pot or stove left on

If you see it: A drop in upkeep can mean tiredness, pain, low mood, or memory changes. Light help with chores a few hours a week can make a big difference.

☐ 7. Mood and memory

- Repeating the same story or question in one visit
- Missed appointments, or giving up hobbies and friends
- Seeming flat, anxious, or more irritable than usual

If you see it: Write down specific examples and dates. They help a doctor tell normal aging from something treatable, like depression or a medication side effect.

☐ 8. The car

- New dents or scrapes
- Getting lost on familiar routes
- Friends or neighbors quietly worried about their driving

If you see it: Take a ride with them. If you're worried, a driving assessment from an occupational therapist takes the decision out of your hands.

☐ 9. Emergency readiness

- Could they reach a phone if they fell? Is a phone kept on them?
- Working smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors
- Emergency numbers and a medication list somewhere easy to find

If you see it: Test the detectors while you're there. Put a contact and medication list on the fridge, where paramedics know to look.

☐ 10. Who would notice?

- How many days go by without them talking to anyone?
- If they didn't answer the phone tomorrow, who would notice, and how soon?
- Does a neighbor have a key?

If you see it: This is the most important question on the list. Set up a daily check-in: a regular call from family, a neighbor's routine, or a service.

When to call the doctor: Call their doctor sooner if you notice sudden confusion, a fall with any injury, rapid weight loss, or a big change over days rather than months. In an emergency, call 911.

Can't visit every day?

CheckWellCall gives your parent a friendly phone call at the same time every day. If they don't answer or something sounds wrong, you get a text and an email right away. No app or device for them to learn. Just their regular phone.

Learn more at **checkwellcall.com** or call 1-877-343-1891.

This checklist is general information to help families notice changes. It is not medical advice. Talk with your parent's doctor about any concerns.