

# Subtle Signs it's Time to Consider Assisted Living



**Why a proactive approach is best**

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## Life is good...*for now*

When is the right time to consider a move to senior living for someone you love? The answer is probably earlier than you think.

When your parents are still healthy and active is the ideal time to make the transition to senior living. They will easily be able to form new relationships, participate in programs and activities, travel, garden, exercise and explore whatever makes them happy and able to enjoy life to the fullest. This will also allow enough time to get comfortable and oriented prior to any significant health changes.

Mom and dad may be just fine living on their own now and it may seem too soon to consider a move, but the situation can and *likely* will change. An accident or sudden illness can cause the family to scramble to find a safe and satisfying living option, or your parents' quality of life can slowly decline over time until one day it's obvious that they need help.

To avoid rushing into a decision caused by either situation, start planning for a better future for your parents today, while they are in good health and spirits and can fully appreciate and enjoy the benefits of senior community living.

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## Subtle Signs it's Time to Move

Look for *subtle* signs and some not so subtle signs that your parents may be ready to move to assisted living—earlier rather than later—in order to take advantage of all of the benefits it has to offer.

**The curb appeal is gone**—Home upkeep is demanding, especially for older adults, who may struggle to keep the lawn mowed, landscaping watered, trees trimmed, gutters cleaned, windows washed and driveway cleared, or they may struggle to find help they can trust.

**Indoors is more “shabby” than chic**—The furniture is dusty, the floors are sticky, once organized closets have become hiding spaces, dirty dishes sit in the sink longer than usual, the bed is unmade and laundry and unopened mail are piling up. Mom is uncomfortable with a housekeeper, so you're left to help clean house on your day off and that's not exactly the quality together time you had in mind.

**The kitchen is not so fresh**—The refrigerator once filled with fresh vegetables and ingredients is now filled with already prepared meals and even some expired food, and there are multiples of the same items in the cupboard. Frozen entrées fill the freezer of a former home chef and entertainer.

**The car should stay parked**—There are new, unexplained nicks and dents on the normally spotless car. The mechanical warning lights stay on longer than usual without getting checked out, and dad has become more easily frustrated behind the wheel when driving.

**Unhappy with the “island” lifestyle**—Unless your parents live in a well-connected neighborhood or can still safely drive, they may find their social circle is shrinking and are feeling isolated. Even being able to drive doesn't mean seeing friends and family is easy or convenient. Watching endless hours of television or staying in bed during the day may be signs of loneliness and depression.

**Mom's not looking her personal best**—Mom's hair needs a trim, she's stopped wearing full makeup and no longer gets dressed up. These are signs mom may be depressed, or she is simply not feeling well or strong enough to care for herself.

**Dad is slowing down and showing moments of confusion**—Beyond being frustrated with the television remote control or with a missing or uncharged cell phone, maybe he missed paying a bill, was late filling his prescription or even forgot if he took his pills this morning. Dad is charismatic and tells a great story, but he's fuzzy on some of the details. He is physically slowing down, his posture is changing, and he could benefit from a regular exercise routine.

**You're losing sleep**—Worrying about your parents' ability to keep living safely, happily and independently in their own home is keeping you up at night. Plus, having to make more frequent visits to help with household chores and run errands is taking a toll on your busy schedule and is actually keeping you from enjoying the quality one-on-one time with your parents that you'd prefer.

## Time for What Truly Matters

Find out how your parents view “aging well” and what’s important to them by discussing their goals and wishes as well as their fears and concerns. Together you can determine when the time is right to make a move and where and how they’d like to live. Meanwhile, keep your eyes open for subtle personal and lifestyle changes that may signal it’s time for your parents to let go of some of their burdens and responsibilities and to accept a little support with daily living, so they can focus on what matters most in life.



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