

When to Worry Checklist

In the spaces below, checkmark those that apply to your loved one within the past six months. This will give you an indication of some proactive and appropriate next steps.

Changes in Physical Condition

- Decline in personal appearance
- Decline in personal hygiene
- Increased occurrence of Urinary Tract Infections (UTI)
- Fallen in the past year

Changes in Perceptual Abilities

- Decline in appetite
- Quick, unexpected response to heat or cold (drinks a hot beverage without checking for temperature)
- Inability to recognize something burning or off-smelling
- Inability to hear buzzers, phones or safety alarms
- Trouble hearing the television or radio when others do not?
- Strain or struggle to hear/understand conversations?

Changes in Cognitive Abilities

- Repeating oneself (questions, answers, or stories)
- Responding indirectly to common questions (ex, Question: "Do you know what day it is?" Response: "Why, don't you know?")
- Disoriented in familiar settings (office, restaurant)
- Sudden unexpected changes in mental status (calm, quickly upset, quickly calm)
- Decline in social skills (doesn't engage in conversation)
- Decline in judgment (leaves water running, stove on)
- Unpaid bills
- Increased charitable contributions or check writing (may be victim of scam)
- Unfinished tasks (food not put away, bed not made)
- Inability to make decisions (fear of making the wrong decision)
- Depression or withdrawn behavior

NEXT STEPS

1. Have other family members complete this checklist to assess if everyone is on the same page. (If you're not, consider attending our next session, "Having the Difficult Conversations" on December 5.)
2. Consult with your loved one and their primary care physician to get an accurate picture of what they are able to independently accomplish.
3. Make a list of your current resources to help care for your loved one. This could be financial resources, family members who are able and willing to provide additional care, or support services such as a pastor, doctor, or gerontology specialist.
4. Within your loved ones home, make sure that safety measures are appropriately taken.

