



Caregivers Guide



GROVE POINTE
ASSISTED LIVING



Table of Contents

Four Signs Your Loved One May Need Extra Help	4
Making Your Home Safer	6
Four Tips for Keeping Your Loved One Active	10
Eating Well to Live Well	12
Being Mindful About Brain Health.	14
Assisted Living or Personal Care?	17
How to Choose Assisted Living	18
Assisted Living Checklist	19
Taking Care of Yourself.	20
The Family Caregiver Bill of Rights	22

Four Signs Your Loved One May Need Extra Help



Every day, unpaid family caregivers all over the country do their best to provide the care their parent or other family member needs. But there are some situations where professional assistance is needed, either temporarily or permanently. How do you know if your loved one would benefit from professional help such as companion care or by moving into an assisted living community? Here are four signs to look for:

- » **Escalating everyday needs.** Everyday meal making, housekeeping, laundry and chores can become too much to handle on your own. You may be tasked with transportation or other household-related activities beyond your own everyday obligations that could become overwhelming – and possibly put you or your loved one at risk if they need this extra help.
- » **Home safety.** Is their home – or yours – equipped for their physical safety? Consider their ability to navigate stairs, move safely around the furniture or get in and out of the tub or shower. Making home modifications may not be financially possible, since they can cost thousands of dollars.



- » **Financial strain.** The average family caregiver spends around \$7,000 per year on out-of-pocket caregiving expenses.* In addition to added costs, many family caregivers have to cut back on work hours, which reduces their income. It may become financially unfeasible to continue caring for your loved one at home.
- » **Emotional stress.** Juggling caregiving with work and family life is difficult and can be stressful. And sometimes that emotional cost can be too high. Family caregivers are at risk of depression, anxiety and poor health themselves. Caregiver burnout can leave you physically and emotionally unable to provide good care. Family dynamics come into play, as well. If you don't have a healthy relationship with the person you're caring for, that only adds to the emotional difficulty.

Choosing outside help is not a sign of failure. It's a sign you want the best for your loved one – and sometimes that means finding other resources. If you need help researching your options, feel free to call us at 502.289.1454.

*Source: Family Caregiving and Out-of-Pocket Costs: 2016 Report (AARP)

Making Your Home Safer



According to the Centers for Disease Control, an older adult falls every second of every day. Falls are the number one cause of hip fractures. Fortunately, there are things you can do to help prevent falls and make your home safer overall for the older adult in your care.

START WITH THE FLOOR

- » **Do you have throw rugs, which can be a tripping hazard?** Remove them or use double-sided tape to make sure they don't slip or curl up on the ends.
- » **Is there clutter, like books, papers, magazines, clothing, boxes or blankets?** Always keep objects off the floor. It may be a good time to clean out unnecessary items or invest in simple storage devices to keep floors clear.
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- » **Does furniture placement make it difficult to navigate through a room?** Make sure there are open pathways throughout each room. You may need to do some rearranging or remove a few pieces to make it easier to walk.

CHECK STAIRS, INSIDE AND OUTDOORS

- » **Are stairs and landings clear?** Always keep stairs clear of objects, and make sure landings are clutter-free.
- » **Are there loose or broken steps or loose carpeting on the stairs?** Repair or replace right away. Consider attaching nonslip treads to the stairs.
- » **Are there secure handrails on both sides of the stairs?** Fix loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are as long as the stairs.
- » **Are all stairways well lit?** Make sure there's adequate lighting. Replace burned-out bulbs right away. Increase bulb wattage to allowable limits. Consider adding a light switch that glows at both the top and bottom of stairways.

CONSIDER THE COMMON AREAS

- » **Are there tripping hazards in the kitchen or living room?** Remove or secure area rugs, and make sure cords are stored close to the wall. Keep clutter off the floor, and make sure traffic areas are clear of furniture.
- » **What's out of reach?** Make sure commonly used items such as remote controls or kitchen utensils are within easy reach. Secure dangerous chemicals and cleaning materials on higher shelves or in locked cabinets.
- » **Is the lighting adequate?** Adding task lighting in the kitchen or extra lighting in the living room or den helps clearly illuminate chores and tasks.
- » **Are smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in place and functioning?** Install these devices in each bedroom, hallways and in common areas. Change smoke detector batteries once a year. Pick a date such as a birthday or the change to daylight saving time to help you remember.

EXAMINE ALL YOUR BATHROOMS

- » **Is the floor free from tripping hazards?** Remove or secure throw rugs. Make sure electrical cords are coiled or taped out of the way.
- » **Is the flooring slip-resistant?** Ceramic and tile flooring get slippery when wet. Place a low-profile, nonslip kitchen mat by the tub or shower, toilet and sink.
- » **Are your bathrooms equipped for people with mobility issues?** Grab bars in the tub or shower and next to the toilet help loved ones transition more safely. A transfer bench in the shower, as well as a detachable, hand-held showerhead, will also make bathing easier.

- » **Is the path to the bathroom clear and well-lit?** Remove clutter or decorative items in that pathway. Place automatic night lighting near their bed, along the way and in the bathroom. A light switch that glows is helpful at night.
- » **Is the tub or shower floor slippery?** Permanent nonslip strips can be applied easily. Suction mats tend to develop mildew and get slippery over time.
- » **Are the faucets user-friendly for those with problems gripping?** Consider installing a lever-handled or hands-free faucet for ease of use.

UPDATE THEIR BEDROOM

- » **Is their bedroom easily accessible?** If stairs are a problem, you may need to relocate their bedroom to the main floor. If redesigning a bedroom to accommodate a wheelchair, make sure it's ADA-compliant.
- » **Can they easily access items in the closet and drawers?** Consider removing closet doors and replacing small drawer knobs with larger ones that are easier to use. Make sure frequently used items are within easy reach and not stored too high or too low.
- » **Is it adequately lit?** Automatic night lights and lamps on either side of the bed will make it easier to see at night.
- » **Are pathways clear?** Remove clutter and obstacles such as extra furniture so they can move easily around the room.
- » **Is communication from the bedroom simple?** If the bedroom doesn't already have a phone, consider installing one, and keep emergency numbers in large print right next to it. An intercom system is another way to make sure it's easy to reach out if they need help.

Four Tips for Keeping Your Loved One Active



While many older adults say they want to maintain their overall health as they age, fewer than half of those ages 75 and above are physically active. Yet the World Health Organization reports that physically active older adults have lower mortality rates, higher levels of cognitive and functional health, and are less likely to have heart disease or Type 2 diabetes.

If your loved one isn't as active as they should be, here are some ideas to get them moving. (NOTE: Before starting a new form of exercise, consult with their doctor.)

- » **Keep it fun.** It's a lot easier to create a healthy habit when you enjoy what you're doing. Talk with your loved one to find out what interests them and what they'd like to do. Is there an activity they used to do that they'd like to take up again? Encourage them to try things like dancing, bowling, bocce ball, golf, tennis or pickleball. Experiment until you find something they think is fun.
- » **Get outside.** Exercise doesn't always have to seem like exercise. Look for ways to get them outdoors for fresh air, sunshine and movement. If they like working in the garden or yard, but it's a bit too much these days, set up a container garden or raised garden bed that's easier to reach and has a smaller footprint. Look for walking and biking trails in your area. Walking tours and window shopping are good ways to explore your town too.
- » **Build strength.** Strength exercises make it easier to climb stairs, lift groceries and even open jars. Simple ways to build strength include lifting small hand weights or even soup cans. You can buy inexpensive resistance bands they can use at home for arm and leg exercises. Doing leg raises with small ankle weights is an option too.
- » **Take it easy.** Physical activity doesn't have to be a high-intensity workout. Yoga for older adults, and chair yoga for those less mobile, works the whole body in a low-impact way. Tai Chi is about slow, smooth movements that engage the body and the mind. It also helps with balance. You can also suggest slow laps in the pool, or a stroll around the neighborhood or indoor shopping mall.

Everyone has different levels of ability and mobility, but with some patience and experimentation, you and your loved one can find simple ways for them to keep moving toward a healthier lifestyle.

Eating Well to Live Well



Maintaining a healthy, well-balanced diet is important for everyone – but what a healthy diet looks like changes as the body ages. (NOTE: Before making any dietary changes for your loved one, consult their doctor.)

OLDER ADULT NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, certain nutrients are important for older adults to maintain good health.

- » **Calcium and vitamin D.** To help maintain bone health, older adults need more of these nutrients. It's recommended they have three servings of vitamin D-fortified low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt each day. Other calcium-rich foods include dark green leafy vegetables, canned fish with soft bones and fortified cereals and fruit juices. If they take calcium supplements or multivitamins, choose one that also has vitamin D.
- » **Vitamin B-12.** This vitamin helps keep metabolism, blood cells, bones and nerves healthy. Good sources of B-12 include meat, fish, shellfish, eggs and milk. Some cereals are also fortified with B-12.

» **Potassium.** Eating potassium-rich foods can help reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Incorporate fruits, vegetables and low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt into daily meals.

» **Fiber.** Dietary fiber helps control weight gain and lowers the risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Whole grain breads, beans, fruit and vegetables are good sources of fiber.

TIPS FOR MAKING DIETARY CHANGES

The sense of taste gets weaker with age, which can impact the desire to eat.

- To boost flavor without adding salt, add lemon juice, herbs and spices.
- Make meals more visually appealing with brightly colored foods.
- Offer a variety of tastes and textures so a meal doesn't seem bland.
- Consider offering five or six smaller meals instead of three larger ones.

Age impacts the sense of thirst as well. Many older adults don't realize they're thirsty until they're already dehydrated.

- Put water out to sip throughout the day.
- Offer other hydrating options such as milk, low-sodium broth or fruits and veggies like watermelon, cucumbers, strawberries, celery or lettuce.
- Low-fat, low-sugar smoothies are another way to keep them hydrated, with the added benefit of healthy vitamins and minerals.

Change is hard – take it slowly.

- Start with small changes. If they normally eat white bread, serve a wheat bread sandwich once or twice a week. As they get used to it, gradually increase it until white bread is cut from their diet.
- Don't isolate them with changes. Eating is a social activity, and singling them out for dietary changes can make them more resistant. As much as possible, eat with them, and eat the same things.

Being Mindful about Brain Health



Maintaining cognitive health does more than help a person think clearly or remember. A healthy brain helps with motor control, how well emotions are interpreted and responded to, and how well the body's senses function. Here are some simple ways to help your loved one maintain brain health.

KEEP CONNECTED

Older adults with strong social connections and activity are less likely to experience a decline in their cognitive functioning.

- Encourage your loved one to participate in some group activities, such as book clubs, religious gatherings or choral groups.
- Help them find ways they can volunteer. Using their skills while helping others not only helps them make meaningful social connections, but gives them a sense of purpose as well.
- If they have trouble getting around, help their social life by arranging visits from friends and neighbors, and setting up phone calls or video chats with family.

KEEP MOVING

Older adults who are physically active tend to have higher levels of functional and cognitive health. Physical activity influences brain metabolism, and studies show that people perform better on memory tests when they're taken after a period of physical exertion.

- Cardio exercise such as dancing or brisk walking has been linked to growth in the part of the brain that creates new memories. Encourage a 30-minute walk several times a week, or turn up the music for a dance party in the living room.
- Tai Chi engages the body and the mind and is often recommended for older adults because it's a slow-moving and low-impact way to exercise.
- Less rigorous activity still has benefits. Gardening and light housework are options, as are chair yoga and seated strength exercises.

KEEP LEARNING

Crossword puzzles and sudoku are fine, but older adults get more brain benefits by doing tasks that are challenging and involve active engagement. Learning something new helps build the connections between brain cells. Encourage them with activities like:

- learning a new skill such as digital photography, quilting or chess
- learning a new language
- trying something creative like writing or sketching
- taking an interesting class through a local community college or lifelong learning center



Assisted Living or Personal Care?

We understand that in choosing the right support for your loved one, you may have questions. By learning the differences between assisted living and personal care, you can find the best option for the older adult in your life.

- » **Staffing.** Personal care communities provide 24/7 nursing staff. Kentucky assisted living communities are not required to provide 24/7 nursing staff for residents, but are still required to have 24/7 staff.
- » **Model.** An assisted living community is a model of care providing socialization for individuals who need minimal assistance with the activities of daily living (such as bathing, dressing and grooming). For example, assisted living communities can provide reminders for taking medication but cannot administer medicine. Personal care communities provide the same social environment but with the added benefit of licensed medical staff, including the administering of medication.
- » **Eligibility.** For both assisted living and personal care, individuals must be able to ambulate or be independent of assistance if using a walker or wheelchair. In addition, individuals must be able to manage incontinence with minimal assistance and be able to feed themselves to be eligible for assisted living or personal care.
- » **Certification or license.** Assisted living communities are certified by the Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living. Personal care communities are licensed by the Office of Inspector General.

How to Choose Assisted Living

The assisted living social model of living is for older adults who need assistance with household-related activities essential to daily life. Assisted living communities today help maintain independence and provide meaningful activities and interactions in an environment that's safe, structured and comfortable.

If it's time to consider assisted living, you'll need to do some research to find what works best for your loved one. Here are some questions that will help you narrow your search.

- Is the community licensed to handle the specific needs of assisted living residents?
- What training has the staff received?
- What is the resident-to-staff ratio?
- Do the programs keep residents alert, stimulated and entertained? Do they provide meaningful activities?
- Is there an on-site health clinic? Do doctors visit regularly? Can residents visit their own doctors and dentists?
- What is the visiting schedule? Will you have privacy during your visits? Will you be able to take your loved one off campus?
- What is covered in the basic fee, and what is extra?
- Does the community offer additional levels of living should medical needs occur?

Schedule visits and take the assisted living visit checklist with you. It will help you evaluate options objectively. Consider bringing a trusted family member or friend with you to help observe the community and complete the checklist.

Assisted Living Checklist

Community name: _____

Date of visit: _____

Location

- convenient for you to visit
- near hospital or medical plaza
- safe neighborhood

Physical environment

- specifically designed for assisted living
- clean, well maintained and odor-free
- doors and rooms clearly labeled with words and/or pictures
- private areas to interact with family
- good lighting
- outdoor areas for residents
- private apartments
- hallway handrails
- grab bars in bathrooms
- 24-hour emergency response system

Assistance

- staff trained to work with older adults
- individualized, personal assessment plans that are updated regularly
- family support and education
- staff assists with and participates in activities
- consistent daily schedule of enrichment activities
- staff background checks

Taking Care of Yourself



As a family caregiver, the natural inclination is to take care of your loved one's needs first. You may feel like you have no time to take care of yourself, or you may feel guilty about taking breaks from caregiving. But if you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to give the best help to your loved one.

Tending to your own physical, mental and emotional needs lets you approach caregiving from a place of wellness and strength. Here are some things you can do to nurture your body, mind and spirit.

BODY

- Dehydration leaves you feeling exhausted and impacts your thinking. Keep a water bottle handy so you can sip throughout the day. You can also find smartphone apps that will prompt you to take a drink.
- Food is fuel. Stock your kitchen with healthy snacks like nuts, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. (You can buy many of these presliced and preportioned.) Search online for simple, nutritious recipes, then enlist help to put meals together. Save some time by shopping online – some stores even deliver.

- Make time to get your body moving. You may not be able to go to the gym, but what about walking the dog or walking around the block? Dance while you vacuum; stretch while you fold laundry.
- If you're sick, go to the doctor. You may feel you don't have time, but by not going, you're putting yourself and your loved ones at risk.

MIND

- Take mental breaks every day. Think of it as taking a refreshing breath of air. Read a book; do a crossword puzzle; draw, write, knit or even color; listen to music or a podcast. Find an activity that engages your mind in something other than caregiving.
- Many people find meditation a good way to manage stress or anxiety. There are online videos and smartphone apps with guided meditations and breathing exercises to help you focus and think clearly.
- If you need a positive perspective on things, try a gratitude journal. It's a helpful way to remind yourself about what's good in life.

SPIRIT

- Feeling isolated contributes to depression and poor health, so make a point to stay connected to friends. Chat on the phone or make a regular coffee or exercise date. Keep up with your book club, small group study or other social circles.
- You don't have to process a family caregiver's complicated feelings alone. Support groups are a good outlet for sharing your experiences with others who understand. You can also reach out to spiritual counselors or a licensed therapist.

The Family Caregiver's Bill of Rights

I have the right to take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my loved one.

I have the right to seek help from others even though my loved ones may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.

I have the right to maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she didn't need my help. I know that I do everything that I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.

I have the right to get angry, be depressed and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

I have the right to reject any attempts by my loved one (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt and/or depression.

I have the right to receive consideration, affection, forgiveness and acceptance for what I do, from my loved ones, for as long as I offer these qualities in return.

I have the right to take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my loved one.

I have the right to protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my loved one no longer needs my full-time help.

I have the right to expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired persons in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting caregivers.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Find out how you or a loved one can benefit from the lifestyle
and services at Grove Pointe.

502.289.1454

Call to schedule a personal appointment.



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