

Is it Time to Move to Assisted Living: The Checklist

Eskaton Lodges



Making the decision to help an aging parent, family member or friend move from home can be complex. Above all, you want him or her to be safe and well. Although every situation is different, Eskaton can give you valuable information to help decide whether it might be time for assisted living. Let us help you navigate this next step. At Eskaton, we're transforming the aging experience.

1. Big-picture

Certain situations make it more obvious that it's wise to start thinking about alternate living arrangements. Look for:

- Recent accidents or close calls.
- A slow recovery or a chronic health condition that's worsening.
- Increasing difficulty managing the activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, grooming)

2. Up-close

Give your loved one a big hug. Clues aren't always visible from a distance; especially when you don't see the person every day. Look for:

- Noticeable weight loss, gain or changes in appearance.
- Seeming more frail.
- Strange body odor.

3. Social

Social circles tend to shrink with age, which can have health and safety implications. Look for:

- Signs of active friendships.
- Signs that your loved one has cut back on activities and interests or days spent without leaving the house.
- Someone who checks in on a regular basis.

4. Money

Mail can offer clues to managing money, a common early warning sign of cognitive difficulty. Look for:

- Snowdrifts of mail in various places.
- Unopened personal mail or bills.
- Thank-you messages from charities.

5. Driving

Take a drive with your loved one behind the wheel, if he or she is still driving. Look for:

- Nicks or dents on the car.
- Whether the person promptly fastens his or her seatbelt.
- Tension, preoccupation, or being easily distracted.
- Signs of dangerous driving.

6. Kitchen

Go through the kitchen, from fridge to cupboards to oven. Look for:

- Stale or expired foods, or multiples of the same item.
- Broken appliances.
- Signs of fire.

7. Around-the-house

Look around the living areas. Look for:

- Lots of clutter.
- Signs of lax housekeeping.
- Bathroom grime and clutter.

8. Pet-care and plant-care

An ability to take care of pets and plants goes along with self-care. Look for:

- Plants that are dying, dead, or just gone.
- Animals that don't seem well tended.

9. Home-maintenance

Walk around the yard. Yard maintenance — or lack of it — can yield clues. Look for:

- Signs of neglect.
- Newspapers in the bushes.
- Mail piled up in the mailbox.

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10. Get help

Get the input of others who know your loved one. Gently probing about what others think isn't nosy; you're being loving, concerned, and proactive. Look for:

- Input from those in your loved one's circle.
- Medical insight.
- A second opinion.
- Call a Care Manager (Eskaton has them!).

11. Caregiver burnout

Some information is intangible — it has to do with feelings and emotional stress levels.

Ask yourself, how am I doing? For example, am I experiencing difficulty sleeping, diminished social engagement, loss of enjoyment in life or increasing irritability?

What's my loved one's emotional state? _____

If your loved one has a full life, community connections, and seems to be thriving, it's worth exploring in-home care options before pressing a move from a beloved home.

If your loved one is showing signs that living alone is a strain, it may be time for a talk. Broach the subject of where to live in a neutral way. You may find that your loved one harbors the same fears for current and future safety and security that you do. Find out what your loved one fears most about moving and about staying before launching into your own worries and what you think ought to be done.