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C O M F O R T F O R T H E H O L I D A Y S



IN-HOME SENIOR CARE

Assessment Guide





Using Your Five Senses TO ASSESS YOUR LOVED ONE'S CARE NEEDS

Many holiday traditions tempt your five senses. These senses can also be used to evaluate the status of elderly family members. Families often overlook a variety of warning signs such as forgetfulness, lack of house cleaning or a decrease in physical appearance by writing them off to "old age".

Below is a checklist using each of your five senses that provide key indicators or warning signs to help determine if your family members are in need of additional care or assistance.

SIGHT – Looking at the senior's appearance can be a sign that they are being limited either physically or mentally from completing otherwise normal daily tasks.

- Are they getting out of their night clothes for the day?
- Are they wearing clothing with food stains?
- Is their hair completely combed?
- Is he normally clean shaven but now is not?
- Do their teeth appear clean?
- Does she continue to wear makeup?
- How do their shoes look?
- Is the house orderly and clean?

SOUND – Listening to what seniors say and how they speak can tell you a lot about their current mental status. Don't assume that "old age" is causing these problems; doing so can delay uncovering the real cause.

- Do they call you by name?
- Are they speaking normally?
- Are they up on the news?
- Have they continued their outside activities?
- Do they have future plans or goals?

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*Give Comfort For
The Holidays*

*Holiday Gift
Certificates*

Why not make the season more enjoyable for someone you care about with a Comfort Keepers' gift certificate? Call your local office for more information.



Using Your Five Senses

TO ASSESS YOUR LOVED ONE'S CARE NEEDS

SMELL – Using your nose as an indicator can help you determine if your family member is bathing properly, participating in otherwise normal activities (cleaning their house), or whether or not they are eating regularly (if they have spoiled food in their kitchen).

- Does their living environment possess any unpleasant odors?
- Do the refrigerator or cupboards smell?
- Is there an unusual amount of mail, garbage, clutter, dust, or dirt?

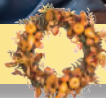
TASTE – Tasting their food and sorting through their medications can help you determine if they are eating healthy or even worse, taking expired medicine.

- Do they have fresh and stocked pantry items?
- Look at the expiration dates. How does the food taste?
- Does the person appear to move around the kitchen safely?
- Are there many different prescriptions?
- Do the medications come from different doctors or pharmacies?
- What about the expiration dates on the medications?

TOUCH – A simple hug could tell you that your family member is fragile, losing weight and putting him or herself in jeopardy of injury or even malnourishment from not eating properly.

- Do they appear healthy?
- Touch their skin – is it soft, supple and is the color normal?
- Do they have unusual tearing or bruising of the skin?
- Are they losing weight?

If you sense a problem based on the above indicators, you and other family members should waste no time in taking the appropriate next steps. As difficult as the process might be, keep reminding yourself that by being proactive, as a result of your observations, you will not only provide safety for your family member, but will also keep them happy and healthy.





Assessing Your Home-Care Needs

There are a number of options available for finding help at home. The best way to start is to assess the needs of the person you are caring for. In order to help you evaluate what type and how much help you need, consider the following areas of care:

- Personal Care: bathing, eating, dressing, toileting
- Household Care: cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping
- Health Care: medication management, physician's appointments, physical therapy
- Emotional Care: companionship, meaningful activities, conversation

While considering all of the options, it is also important to evaluate the values and preferences of the person receiving care. Your loved one may be more comfortable with a caregiver who shares their cultural background and/or language. Also determine if they have a preference between male or female caregivers, particularly if personal care will be provided.

The following Needs Assessment Checklist from Family Care America will provide an easy way to evaluate the care status of your loved ones.



ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLS)

ACTIVITY	Accomplishes Alone	Needs Some Help	Needs Much Help
Bathing			
Dressing			
Grooming			
Toileting			
Eating A Nutritious Diet			
Getting Out Of Bed			
Getting Out Of Chair			
Walking			



Assessing Your Home-Care Needs

INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (IADLS)

ACTIVITY	Accomplishes Alone	Needs Some Help	Needs Much Help
Using The Telephone			
Shopping For Personal Items			
Transportation			
Managing Money			
Doing Laundry			
Doing Light Housework			
Preparing Meals			



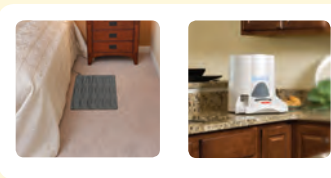
THE SEASON FOR SAFETY

All seniors want to be independent and living in their own home, but nothing is more important than their safety. This season, consider how technology can help to provide for their wellbeing while living at home. Products like *SafetyChoice* in-home care technology solutions by Comfort Keepers means help is always at hand. *SafetyChoice* complements in-home care services by a professional agency or family caregiver with around the clock monitoring so you know that help is available. Options include items such as a Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS), portable PERS for safety on call while away from home, medication management solutions, video monitoring and in-home monitoring sensors.

CONDITIONS/FUNCTIONAL STATUS

How do the following affect the person's ability to function?

LIMITATION	No Affect	Some Affect	Major Affect
Hearing			
Vision			
Perception			
Orientation			
Thinking			
Memory/Forgetfulness			
Decision-Making Judgement			
Physical Dexterity			
Balance			
Strength			
Energy			
Bowel Control, Impairment			
Physical Impairment			
Depression			
Arthritis			
Hypertension			
Heart Disease			
Diabetes			
Other			



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Family Caregiving And The Holidays

FROM STRESS TO SUCCESS!

For many family caregivers the holiday season gives rise to stress, frustration and anger, instead of peace and goodwill. Already feeling overwhelmed with caregiving tasks, stressed-out caregivers may view traditional holiday preparations as more of a drain of precious energy than a joy.

Following are some suggestions that may help make the holidays more enjoyable for you and your loved ones. Keep in mind that the holidays can provide unique opportunities to seek better communication, connection, and support from family and friends.

An opportunity for communication – Although it is understandable to have reservations about discussing a loved one's impairments, honest communication about the realities of the caregiving situation offers others the opportunity to respond with assistance.

Holiday greetings and a brief note – Some caregivers have had success in writing a brief, non-threatening note describing the person's condition and enclosing it in a holiday greeting card. This can be a way to inform distant or uninvolved relatives about the realities of the caregiving situation.

Be clear about your energy level – Let other family members know that your caregiving duties are keeping you very busy and that you only have so much energy for holiday preparation and hosting duties.

Accept the need to adapt – You may find it easier to allow another family member to host more time-intensive festivities. You may also have to choose which events to attend based on which would be the simplest, least exhausting and most enjoyable for the person for whom you provide care and for you.



A Season Of Nutritious Health

As a senior ages, nutrition plays an increasingly important role in their overall health, wellbeing and vitality. Take the time to understand their shopping and eating habits in the context of their overall dietary requirements. This is especially significant if an older person has an illness such as diabetes, heart disease, depression or even signs of dementia. Here are a few things to look for:

- A diet that is low in saturated fats with five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day
- Higher recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) of certain key nutrients than younger adults. For example, protein it isn't just for growing bodies - it helps seniors maintain body tissues, the immune system and muscle mass.
- Calcium is important to strengthen teeth and bones and reduce risk of osteoporosis.
- Vitamin D plays a supporting role, helping calcium function to its fullest extent.
- Vitamin B6 supports immune system function, assisting metabolism of food and formation of red blood cells.
- Seniors should stay well-hydrated - they need to make a point of consuming eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day to help flush toxins from the body, maintain flexibility in the joints, relieve constipation, and maintain mental focus.
- Food storage and use of perishable items by expiration date should be stressed, and verified from time to time.



The information presented should not replace the medical advice of your physician. Always consult with your physician before making any dietary changes.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

	Very Good	Acceptable	Needs Attention
Foods well stored, with no spoilage or contamination			
Ample caloric intake for age, weight and height			
Good balance of food groups and healthful ingredients			
Proper vitamin and mineral intake according to weight, age and health			
Foods adjusted in accordance with diseases or deficiencies			
Drinking ample water to maintain hydration			





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Learn about the great and fulfilling full- and part-time
opportunities of becoming a *Comfort Keepers* caregiver.
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