

Fifteen Questions to Help You Decide if it is Time to Move Your Parent

1. Does your parent have family living close by? (Within 20 minutes) This is critical. It is not fair for a parent to expect adult children with jobs and families to travel many miles to care for them when problems arise. This is a red flag.
2. How many family members are **willing and able** to help in a crisis? You need to have a plan in the event of a crisis. Who is going to help?
3. How many family members are willing and able to help **on an ongoing basis**? Be real on this question. If a parent is going to stay at home they have to be able to do everything themselves or you have to have a team in place to help. Remember it takes a village to care for an aging parent. Trying to do this alone is a recipe for stress.
4. Can and should your parent still be driving? Are you worried about their driving? Don't wait until something happens, you will regret this forever! How would you feel if you knew your parent should not be driving yet you did nothing and they caused the death of an innocent person? We all like to believe these things won't happen to us but isn't it better to be prepared?
5. Has your parent lost weight lately? They may not be eating. This could be due to depression or the fact that it takes too much effort to cook and clean.
6. Have you noticed spoiled food in the refrigerator when you visit? This is another red flag that they may not be eating regularly.
7. Does your parent have a strong social community? Are they active in groups, church and other organizations? If they used to be very active but now do not seem to want to participate this is a red flag that something is wrong. Often those with dementia or someone who is depressed will pull away from any social activities.
8. How many of their friends are still able to visit? If most of their friends have passed on or are unable to drive to visit, your parent may be feeling isolated in their home.

9. Does your parent have a chronic disease? Someone with a chronic disease may have more challenges coping with day to day activities.
10. Has your parent recently lost something of value? Missing jewelry or other valuables that later turn up in unusual places are cause for concern.
11. What do the neighbors say? Ask the neighbors what they may have noticed. They may not want to butt into your business but if you let them know you are concerned you may be surprised at what they tell you.
12. Is the area where your parent's home is located still safe? Things may have changed in 40 or 50 years since they purchased the home. That wonderful neighborhood you grew up in could have changed a lot.
13. How is the upkeep on the house? Are maintenance issues taken care of? If your Dad was always meticulous with maintenance and yard upkeep and when you drive up you notice the house and yard in need of attention, this is a red flag.
14. Is your parent lonely? If they are calling multiple times a day they probably are lonely and maybe even depressed.
15. Do they need help with the management of their medications? If your parent is taking multiple medications it is important that they are taking them at the right time. It is easy to get confused and forget whether you took your pills or not.

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Helping overwhelmed families care for aging parents.

