



# STAGES of SENIOR CARE

*Your Step-by-Step Guide to Making the Best Decisions*

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## Chapter 7: Ten Signs of Trouble

The Home Instead Senior Care Advisory Board has compiled this list of indicators that your loved one may need additional companionship.

1. **Household bills piling up.** Seniors can feel overwhelmed by the simple task of opening and responding to daily mail, as well as balancing a checkbook.
2. **Reluctance to leave the house.** Rather than ask for help, seniors who are having trouble with such functions as walking, remembering, and hearing will pull away from their community and isolate themselves.
3. **Losing interest in meals.** Seniors who suddenly find themselves alone, perhaps after the death of a spouse, can be easily discouraged by such tasks as cooking and tend not to eat properly.
4. **Declining personal hygiene.** Changes in appearance, unkempt hair and body odor, failing to change clothes for days on end, or clothes inappropriate for the weather are among the most obvious signs that a senior needs assistance.
5. **Declining driving skills.** Look for evidence of parking or speeding tickets, fender benders, dents, and scratches on the car.
6. **Scorched pots and pans.** Cooking ware left forgotten on top of an open flame may be a sign of short-term memory loss or even Alzheimer's disease.
7. **Signs of depression.** Feelings of hopelessness and despair, listlessness, fewer visits with friends and family, a change of sleeping patterns, and lack of interest in the usual hobbies and activities are indicators of depression.
8. **Missed doctors' appointments and social engagements.** These can be signs of depression or forgetfulness. But they can also be the result of no longer having a driver's license and not knowing how to get alternative transportation.
9. **Unkempt house.** Changes in housekeeping may come about because the senior is physically tired. They could also result from depression.
10. **Losing track of medications.** Seniors often take multiple prescriptions for various health conditions. Keeping track without reminders and assistance can be confusing.

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