

Care Needs Checklist for Aging Parents

Use this checklist to quickly understand what kind of help your loved one needs, and whether a caregiver or CNA is the right choice.

Daily Living (ADLs – Activities of Daily Living)

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Do they need help bathing or showering?
- ☐ Do they struggle with dressing?
- ☐ Do they need help using the toilet?
- ☐ Do they have trouble walking or transferring (bed to chair)?
- ☐ Do they need help eating?

What this means:

- Mostly independent → Occasional caregiver support
 - Needs hands-on help → Caregiver or CNA
 - Significant physical help → CNA recommended
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Household & Daily Tasks (IADLs)

- ☐ Are meals being skipped or poorly prepared?
- ☐ Is the home becoming cluttered or unsafe?
- ☐ Are bills unpaid or finances confusing?
- ☐ Are medications forgotten or taken incorrectly?
- ☐ Are they no longer driving safely?

What this means:

- Mild issues → Caregiver support is usually enough
 - Multiple concerns → Regular caregiver assistance needed
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Cognitive & Memory Changes

- ☐ Are they forgetting appointments or conversations?
- ☐ Do they get confused about time or place?
- ☐ Have they wandered or gotten lost?
- ☐ Are they making unsafe decisions?
- ☐ Do they repeat questions frequently?

What this means:

- Mild forgetfulness → Caregiver for supervision
 - Moderate confusion → Structured care plan
 - Safety risks → CNA or higher-level care
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Medical Needs

- ☐ Do they have chronic conditions (diabetes, heart disease)?
- ☐ Do they need help managing medications?
- ☐ Do they require monitoring (blood pressure, glucose)?
- ☐ Have they been recently hospitalized?
- ☐ Do they need wound care or physical support?

What this means:

- Minimal medical needs → Caregiver
 - Ongoing monitoring → Consider CNA
 - Complex care → CNA strongly recommended
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Mobility & Fall Risk

- ☐ Have they fallen in the last 6–12 months?
- ☐ Do they use a walker or cane?
- ☐ Do they seem unsteady when walking?
- ☐ Are stairs becoming difficult or dangerous?
- ☐ Do they need help getting in/out of bed or chairs?

What this means:

- Low risk → Caregiver supervision
 - Moderate risk → Caregiver + safety upgrades
 - High risk or recent falls → CNA support
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Emotional & Social Well-Being

- ☐ Do they seem lonely or isolated?
- ☐ Have they lost interest in activities?
- ☐ Do they show signs of depression?
- ☐ Are they anxious or fearful?

What this means:

- Social isolation → Caregiver companionship can help significantly
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Safety Concerns

- ☐ Are appliances left on (stove, oven)?
- ☐ Are doors left unlocked or open?
- ☐ Is there hoarding or unsafe clutter?
- ☐ Are they forgetting to eat or drink?
- ☐ Are there signs of self-neglect?

What this means:

- Any “yes” here → Immediate supervision needed
 - Multiple risks → Consider CNA or full-time care
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Quick Decision Guide

Mostly “No” answers:

→ Occasional help or check-ins

Some “Yes” answers (non-medical):

→ Hire a caregiver

Many “Yes” answers or medical concerns:

→ Hire a CNA

Final Thought

If you're unsure, trust what you're seeing—not what you hope is true.

Care needs often increase slowly, then all at once. This checklist helps you act *before* a crisis happens.

If you'd like, I can turn this into a printable PDF or a scoring tool to make decisions even easier.