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Caregiver Connections

When is it the Right Time to Move?

by Paula Gibson, Regional Director of Communications and Engagement, Azura Memory Care

The following are some common benchmarks that may signal a time to consider a move from independent living. You may recognize only a few, or many may be of concern. The symptoms may be occasional or frequent. Only you can decide whether they are significant enough to make a change.

ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

- loss of peer support systems
- withdrawal from social events, friends, family
- excessive sleep or abnormal daily schedule
- depression and inadequate social stimulation
- fear and insecurity when alone
- depleted or insufficient caregiver resources (family, neighbors, friends, paid help)

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

- lack of interest in personal appearance/hygiene
- difficulty showering or bathing
- difficulty managing laundry
- disinterest in general personal health care measures (taking medication correctly, managing a diet, reporting symptoms accurately, following doctor's orders)
- repeated illnesses or difficulty coping with illness
- difficulty completing grooming, hygiene or dressing tasks
- frequent monitoring/management of health conditions
- difficulty with toileting or incontinence

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

- frequent falls or other injuries at home
- difficulty summoning assistance
- difficulty recognizing/managing dangerous situations
- difficulty with usual household chores, handyman and outdoor maintenance tasks
- unsafe food handling
- difficulty with stairs
- unsafe electrical appliance use
- impaired mobility/senses, resulting in safety concerns
- unable to leave home unassisted

MEDICATION SAFETY

- confusion about medication schedules
- confusion about medication purposes
- medication doses are missed
- too many doses of medication are taken
- non-prescription medications are misused
- bottle labels cannot be read or medication doses and types are self-adjusted without doctor's orders
- difficulty managing pharmacy contacts to fill and refill medications

NUTRITION

- reliance on pre-packaged foods/snacks for meals
- reliance on one meal to last the entire day
- unable to get groceries independently
- difficulty using or fear of the stove and oven
- difficulty planning and preparing a meal
- on the "Cheerio Diet" – main course is cereal
- dehydration or changes in appetite or weight, such as weight loss

COGNITIVE FUNCTION

- difficulty making decisions
- disorientation to any combo of time, person, or place
- difficulty managing day to day responsibilities
- excessive reliance on family or friends
- diminished interest in hobbies or activities that have previously been enjoyed
- anxiety and aggression
- frequent need for cues, prompts and reminders
- diminished concentration ability with games, books, television, conversation
- disturbed sleep patterns
- difficulty using the telephone
- difficulty handling money
- compromised judgment skills