



The
OPTION GROUP
Clear choices. Better care.

Home for the Holidays Checklist:
*Things to look for
while visiting your aging parents.*



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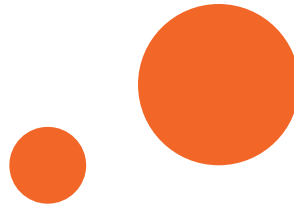
“Although I talk to Mom weekly, I was shocked at how much she had changed since I last saw her in person.”



Introduction

As you make travel plans to see your loved ones this holiday season, you may want to prepare yourself for what you'll find when you get there.

Parents are pretty good at hiding their ailments — until we see them in person. And without a helpful resource, knowing the difference between your mom or dad being a little forgetful, having a “senior moment” or it being something more serious, can be difficult to determine as well as a little scary.



The Option Group can help.

Our team of certified care managers brings 100 years of experience working with adult children who find themselves in the role of caregiver. As a result, we've compiled this helpful checklist of things to watch for while home for the holidays — signs that your aging loved one may need some assistance to continue to live safely and independently at home.



Home for the Holidays Checklist

Watch for the following signs:

- Overdue bills or paying bills twice
- Missed appointments
- Expired food in refrigerator or lack of food in refrigerator
- Signs of dehydration
- Noticeable weight loss
- Difficulty caring for pet
- Wearing soiled clothing or same clothing day after day
- Limited bathing
- Notable odors on person or in home
- Inappropriate things in the trash, or trash in inappropriate locations
- Abnormal spending patterns or unexplainable withdrawals of cash
- Dents or scratches on the car
- Notable bruises on body, face, arms
- Report of falls
- Sleeping on soiled sheets
- Leaving windows or doors unlocked, or stove on
- Unopened mail piling up
- Undeposited checks
- Difficulty with familiar tasks (ie writing a check, making a list, fixing soup, using the phone)
- Getting lost in familiar areas
- Word-finding difficulties
- Forgetting or missing social events or names of familiar people
- Easily losing train of thought
- Repeating questions, ideas or stories, multiple times, in a short period of time
- Easily confused
- Difficulty following a storyline
- Becoming suspicious or fearful
- Becoming a victim of a scam, or financially taken advantage of
- Withdrawing from friends, declining social engagements, increased isolation
- Loss of interest in things they used to enjoy
- Trouble with eye-hand coordination (like putting key into lock, or pressing buttons on microwave)
- Atypical mood changes (ie depression, agitation, irritability, anxiety)
- Impulsiveness
- Difficulty planning (multiple steps to get ready) and underestimating the time related to the task
- Difficulty following multi-step directions (ie recipe or instructions)
- Trouble with balance or spatial relations (ie: judging distances, spilling items more, tripping more)
- Deferred medical care
- Missing medications or confusion about medications
- Losing things frequently, and unable to retrace steps to find item
- Finding items in unusual locations (ie cell phone in the refrigerator, keys in the bathroom)
- Mixing up days and nights



Home for the Holidays Checklist

Consider helping with these tasks:

- Enjoying holiday traditions with them (ie cookie-baking, listening to holiday music)
- Create a playlist of songs from their 20s and 30s that they can easily listen to
- Help with grocery shopping, picking up medications, or going to bank
- Purchasing essentials from store (ie incontinence supplies, underwear, toiletries, personal items)
- Setting up recurring orders for items from Amazon or like service
- Paying bills or creating system for handling bills
- Organizing small family get-togethers
- Scheduling medical appointments
- Screening/interviewing caregivers to help during the week with tasks
- Reminisce with old photos



Home for the Holidays Checklist

Consider removing the following:

- Expired food and medications, or medications no longer being taken
- Tripping hazards in walkways
- Rugs that slip or curl up on edges
- Treads or carpet on steps that do not fit securely
- Broken or dangerous items
- Insecure firearms in the home



Consider leaving the following:

- Cue cards to remind of tasks or upcoming appointments
- Important phone numbers by the phone (Children, Primary Care Physician, Neighbor)
- MOLST Form, POA info, and/or In Case of Emergency contact info on refrigerator
- Large calendar with all appointments written on it in dark pen
- Post-it notes to use
- Large print books with pictures, magazines, word search or puzzle books
- Motion activated lights for hallways, stairways, and in bedroom/bathroom
- Large digital clock display with time, day of week and date
- Simple, easy- to- heat foods
- Medication box with medications divided into days
- Information for a support group for early stage dementia (alz.org)
- Replenish refrigerator with easy to fix or easy to heat foods
- Shower seat or hand-held shower head to make bathing easier and safer
- Fall detection/emergency response system



Home for the Holidays Checklist

Great gift ideas include the following:

- Large display digital clock with time, date and day
- iPod with playlist
- Note cards for them to write notes to friends with preaddressed envelopes
- Calendar
- Post-it Notes
- Puzzle Books
- Supplies for hobbies (knitting, card-making)
- Photo album with family pictures or old pictures
- Meal delivery service that requires no food prep, only heating (Freshly, Mom's Meals)
- Daily Money Manager Service (<https://secure.aadmm.com>)
- Housekeeping Service
- Magazines with pictures
- Lotions with scents
- [A gift card for The Option Group](#)



Home for the Holidays Checklist

Additional Supportive Resources

When you're caring for an aging loved one, additional support is often needed. Below are some helpful resources that can assist you as you develop and execute your caregiving plans.



The Option Group

Our compassionate team of Geriatric/Aging Life Care Managers (GCM) serves family caregivers, medical professionals, and professional family advisors in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania.

Caring for an individual who needs assistance due to aging, dementia, disability or serious illness can be challenging. Don't go it alone.

The Option Group has over 100 years of experience navigating the healthcare maze and has access to hundreds of resources to assist you.

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<https://theoptiongroup.net>

Ellen Platt, Founder & Owner

Ellen Platt is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, Certified Care Manager, and a Certified Aging Life Care Manager. She has over 30 years of experience providing care management, advocacy, placement, and care coordination services to those with catastrophic injuries, chronic diseases, disabilities, and those that are aging and navigating longevity.

Under her leadership, The Option Group has been a trailblazer in the senior industry. The Option Group has worked tirelessly to collaborate with other leaders to provide high-quality services that help families navigate complex and emotional situations.

Ms. Platt remains dedicated to serving the senior community and providing services to meet their needs.

Our managed care services are performed by our compassionate and experienced team members. We invite you to get to know us. Watch our video bios or give us a call!



"We welcome the opportunity to create a care plan so your loved one can live as independently as possible."

MEET ELLEN

