

# Is it time to move?

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. If you need guidance, consult your doctor or an elder care professional.

## A. ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

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

## B. 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
- difficulty coping with illness
- difficulty completing grooming, hygiene or dressing tasks
- health conditions need daily or frequent monitoring and management
- difficulty with toileting or incontinence

## C. ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

- frequent falls or other injuries at home
- difficulty summoning assistance
- difficulty recognizing and/or 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 and/or senses, resulting in safety concerns
- unable to leave home unassisted

## D. 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
- medication doses and types are self-adjusted without doctor's orders
- difficulty managing pharmacy contacts to fill and refill medications

## E. 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
- changes in appetite or weight, such as weight loss

## F. COGNITIVE FUNCTION

- difficulty making decisions
- disorientation to any combination 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