

## **How to Tell When It's Time for Professional Home Health Care**

As people age, they naturally want to continue living independently and self-sufficiently in their own homes, with their familiar personal belongings, pets, and/or family close by.

All too often, though, the very fact of aging affects people's abilities to care for themselves and manage their daily living. This can create health and safety concerns.

Many adult children become their aging parents' primary caregivers, taking on all the responsibilities that go with keeping up the quality of their parents' lives. When self-care becomes progressively too difficult for an older person, or when adult children become overwhelmed by caregiving responsibilities, it is time to consider professional home health care.

These common signs may also indicate the need for professional assistance:

### **Inability to manage personal care:**

- The person does not bathe, groom, and perform oral hygiene.
- The person does not dress appropriately.
- He or she becomes incontinent and is unable to cleanse properly.
- The person forgets to eat, does not eat nutritious meals, and loses weight.
- He or she forgets to take medication, is confused about what to take and when, or is unable to administer injections or change bandages.

### **Inability to manage functional activities of daily living:**

- The person doesn't do laundry, or doesn't change clothing or linens.
- He or she lets dirty dishes and garbage pile up.
- The person leaves the stove and other appliances on, creating a safety hazard.
- He or she is unable to do grocery shopping.
- He or she is unable to use the telephone.
- The person doesn't pay bills or manage money properly.

### **Change in emotional, mental or physical condition:**

- The person has difficulty understanding others.
- The person has difficulty remembering names, situations, and locations.
- He or she gets lost easily.
- The person starts to wander.
- The person has sudden mood swings, becoming angry or depressed.
- He or she falls down often.
- He or she becomes isolated, cutting off social contacts.
- The person is incapable of making decisions.
- He or she suffers a stroke, loss of limb, or other major physical impairment.

### **Do you know someone who needs home care?**

*If you think it may be time for professional home health care, Rutland Area Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice can help. Call us at **802.770.0568**.*