



JOHNSON MCGINNIS

ELDER CARE LAW & ESTATE PLANNING

104 Wyncrest Way, Ste. 100
Hendersonville, TN 37075
615-824-2571

Is My Loved One Safe at Home?

If you are relying on your aunt, uncle, mom or dad, to be a reliable reporter on their own well-being, you may be making a mistake. Often times, parents hide some of the difficulties that they may be having with activities of daily living. Perhaps the change is so gradual for them or they have become so accustomed to this being their new normal, they don't recognize the potential dangers of living alone. Longer, face to face visits often reveal issues that a casual phone conversation can hide. Below are eight actions to take to make sure everything is as it should be at home.

- 1.) Check out their appearance – are they neat and clean? Does their hair look clean? Be mindful of their clothes – are they wearing the same thing as the last time you saw them?
- 2.) Watch how they walk – do you notice any stumbling? Do they lean to one side? Do they pick their feet up when they walk or are they shuffling?
- 3.) Look around the house – are the floors free from stumbling hazards and are the walkways clear?
- 4.) Be sure to look in and around the bathroom. Is there a raised seat on the toilet and a grab bar to make using the toilet easier? What about the shower? Are they able to get in and out of it? Are there safety grab bars in the shower? Is there a hose attachment they can use?
- 5.) Check out the refrigerator and the pantry – is there good food available? It's alright to have snack cakes and treats but make sure there's more than that in the house.
- 6.) Ask them what they usually have for breakfast and the other meals of the day. If possible, watch them make a meal so you can be sure they are able to do so on their own.
- 7.) Look at the car – do you see any new dents? If so, find out how they got there. If you're concerned about your loved one's driving, ask them to drive you somewhere so you can assess their driving abilities.
- 8.) If you are unable to visit, it's a good idea to find someone to make a well visit to check in your loved one. Perhaps a friend or neighbor, possibly a care agency. Give them this list of things to check on and ask them to visit your loved one.

If you are not happy with what you find on your next visit to your loved one's home, a call to a geriatric case manager or elder care coordinator may be a good place to start. They can help you with the proper safety measure and/or additional help to allow your loved one to stay home. They can also let you know your options should staying at home no longer be possible.