



AGING PARENT CHECKLIST

How to Care for Aging Parents: A First 30-Day Checklist

Use this first-30-day checklist to address safety, medications, documents, daily routines, support, backup care, and emergencies.

PRACTICAL. CLEAR. PRINTABLE.

FREE CAREGIVER GUIDE

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SHORT ANSWER

Start with immediate safety and your parent's priorities. During the first month, organize accurate information, obtain needed professional evaluations, clarify decision-making authority, build a care team, and create a backup plan before a crisis.

Days 1-3: immediate safety

- Ask what is most difficult and what help your parent wants.
- Check for falls, new confusion, breathing problems, missed essential medication, lack of food, unsafe driving, wandering, or abuse concerns.
- Confirm working alarms, lighting, clear walkways, bathroom safety, and emergency contacts.
- Call 911 for immediate danger or a medical emergency.

IMPORTANT

New confusion, weakness, speech changes, severe pain, breathing difficulty, or a significant fall may require urgent evaluation.

Week 1: one accurate information set

- Medication list, allergies, diagnoses, clinicians, pharmacy, and insurance.
- Emergency contacts and one preferred family contact.
- Daily routines, mobility and communication needs, food preferences, and calming strategies.
- Locations or copies of advance directives, health care proxy, power of attorney, identification, and important records.
- Home, pet, utility, and transportation information needed during an emergency.

Week 2: understand daily needs

Review bathing, dressing, toileting, meals, medications, mobility, housekeeping, transportation, finances, appointments, hearing, vision, memory, and social connection. Seek a professional assessment when needs are unclear or changing.

- Write a realistic weekly schedule.
- Assign named responsibilities.

- Include respite and time off.
- List services to explore, such as meals, transportation, home care, adult day services, or care management.

Week 3: organize communication

- Choose one privacy-conscious method for family updates.
- Prepare questions before appointments and record the plan afterward.
- Bring a current medication list and relevant legal authorization.
- Ask who to contact after hours and which symptoms require urgent help.
- Keep clinical records in the appropriate system; use a family organizer for reference.

Week 4: create a backup plan

- Name at least two people or services who can step in.
- Plan for a missed visit, hospitalization, power outage, severe weather, evacuation, or caregiver illness.
- Confirm access to keys, pets, equipment, transportation, and supplies.
- Schedule the next family review date.

IMPORTANT

Store information securely. Do not leave Social Security numbers, financial passwords, or complete sensitive records in an exposed binder.

Frequently asked questions

What should I do first?

Address urgent safety, ask what your parent wants, and gather accurate medication, contact, medical, and legal-authority information.

How do I know more help is needed?

Look for changes in safety, mobility, nutrition, medication use, memory, bills, driving, isolation, and caregiver strain, then seek an assessment.

How often should the plan be updated?

Review it after hospitalization, a fall, diagnosis, medication change, functional change, caregiver change, and at regular intervals.

Sources and further reading

- [National Institute on Aging — Does an Older Adult Need Help?](#)

- National Institute on Aging — Caregiver Worksheets
- National Institute on Aging — Getting Your Affairs in Order

Organize essential i nformatio n before a crisis.

The Aging Parent Emergency Binder gives families a printable structure for contacts, medications, routines, documents, home information, and transitions.

[View the
Emergency
Binder →](#)

General educational information only. This guide does not replace emergency services, medical care, legal or tax advice, agency policy, supervisor direction, or a client-specific plan of care. Requirements vary by location and situation. Do not record protected health information in this guide.

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