

GOING HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

Here are Eight Red Flags of Dementia to Look For When Visiting Aging Parents this Holiday Season

Memory Loss: This most common sign of dementia typically appears as a **subtle loss of short-term memory**. They may forget to do seemingly little things, like taking the laundry out of the washing machine, but may remember things from years ago vividly.

Difficulty Communicating: This early symptom of dementia typically takes on **the form of not being able to communicate thoughts into words**. Examples would be the inability to relay fine details, like what they are looking for, or what they might be missing, or what they might be confused about.

Difficulty Completing Everyday Tasks: Dementia interferes with the ability to **complete everyday routine tasks**. Are they forgetting to take their medications, take out the trash on the correct day, or do they forget to bathe or engage in self-care?

Repetition: When storytelling becomes repetitive, especially in a short period, **it can be a sign of dementia**. Does your loved one regularly repeat themselves? Do they tell the same story day after day? Do they ask the same questions even though you've answered them just an hour or a day ago?

Mood Changes: Frequent and sudden changes of mood and behavior can be a **sign of dementia**. Has their overall behavior changed, have they become withdrawn or do they suddenly shift between behavior such as confusion, suspicion, depression, depression, fear, or anxiety?

Time or Place Confusion: Signs of cognitive difficulties related to dementia **such as suddenly forgetting where, or when they are**. Are they getting lost or experiencing confusion even when in familiar environments?

■ **Visual Difficulties:** Are they having trouble reading when they've never had difficulties processing words before? Or maybe they are struggling to distinguish between colors, or even seeing things that may not actually be there.

■ **Apathy: When a person takes on a demeanor of apathy, it can also look like depression or a loss of energy, all of which are early signs of dementia.** Does it appear that they have gone into a state of depression or seemingly stopped enjoying their life?

WHAT'S NEXT?

If you notice any of these signs of dementia, it can be helpful to write down your concerns such as keeping a journal of what you see,

Prompt your loved one to schedule an appointment with their physician and offer to go with them. The physician will study your parent's medical history and will determine if dementia testing is needed.

If you are not in a place where you live close to your parents or loved one, print out this checklist and leave it with the neighbors or a close friend or relative. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

If you are looking for help with dementia or Memory Care in Round Rock, contact us online or call us at 512-399-5080.