



# Does Mom Need Help?

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51 Warning Signs to Look for as Your Mother Ages



FIVE STAR  
SENIOR LIVING

If you have any questions regarding the information you find enclosed or would like to discuss your care housing options, please feel free to reach out to Five Star Senior Living today.

Email us at [info@5ssl.com](mailto:info@5ssl.com) or call us at 617-796-8387.

# Inside This Guide

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Thank you for downloading **Does Mom Need Help? 51 Warning Signs to Look for as Your Mother Ages**. In this guide, you'll learn more about the important warning signs around the health and happiness of your loved one.

As we age, we rely more than ever on the love and kindness of our friends and family. We strive because of the community around us, and caregivers like you make it possible for us to live long, fulfilling lives.

## Get the Support You Deserve

At Five Star Senior Living, we understand the responsibility of caregivers. The warning signs enclosed in this guide are meant to offer you the assistance and support you deserve.

While some warning signs may be innocuous, others require immediate medical attention. This guide is not intended to offer or replace any medical advice, treatment, diagnosis, or opinion. This guide is for educational purposes only.

If at any time you have questions or comments not covered, we want to hear from you. Please reach out to us at [info@5ssl.com](mailto:info@5ssl.com). Or give us a call at 617-796-8387.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roxy Mast". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roxy" and last name "Mast" clearly legible.

Roxy (Mary) Mast

**Five Star Senior Living**

[www.fivestarseniorliving.com](http://www.fivestarseniorliving.com)



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# About the Author

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## Meet Roxy

Roxy Mast, Director of Sales Training at Five Star Senior Living, spent the first four years of her life in a hotel in New Orleans with her grandparents. Her grandparents owned the hotel, located on St. Charles Avenue in the Garden District. She believes this time in her life played a role in shaping her love for caring for older generations.

Roxy has an undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's degree in Education and Counseling-Psychology from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

After a career in psychotherapy, she found her calling in senior living. She believes her purpose in senior living is to help make a difference in the world. She started her career path in senior living in the field of Geriatric Care Management and then spent time at Marriott Senior Living and Sunrise Senior Living before settling down at Five Star Senior Living in 2000.

She currently lives in Texas and has two grandchildren and a dog. She considers herself a quirky woman with plenty to say and plenty of ways to say it, including such Roxy-isms as "He's all big hat and no cattle."

**This ebook comes from her love of teaching others.** She loves finding solutions for seniors and their families, and she hopes you find meaningful solutions in this ebook as well.

# A Life of Reversals

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Life is filled with reversals. When we're young, our parents love and care for us. They ensure we have plenty to eat, warm clothes to wear, a ride to school, and more love than we know what to do with. But as time moves forward, the roles reverse, and we find ourselves transitioning into **the role of caregiver**.

Now your time has come to ensure your mother has everything she needs to stay healthy, stay warm, and stay loved—with plenty of emphasis on the latter.

Even for the best of us, this new responsibility takes an enormous amount of strength. Not only must you care for your mother, you're likely caring for your own family too.

## Spotting the Warning Signs

This place of dual-responsibilities is usually where another life reversal happens. The reversal of fortune. Your mother's health may suddenly suffer or an accident might leave her more dependent on you than ever before.

You know the day is coming when you'll require an extra hand, but anticipating that time can be difficult without understanding the warning signs.

In this guide, you'll find **51 warning signs** from the most common afflictions that may affect your mother. As a caregiver, you must understand the warning signs across all levels in order to provide the best care possible.



# The Warning Signs





# Poor Nutrition

**As we age**, proper nutrition is vital to our health and long life. However, keeping a healthy lifestyle can be difficult for seniors. Think your loved one may suffer from nutritional deficiencies? Pay close attention to the following warning signs:

1. Loss of appetite. (Related: [Depression](#))
2. No interest in eating out.
3. Gradual weight change.
4. Expired or spoiled food found in the house.
5. Skin tone changes.
6. Not as active as she once was.
7. Lethargy or irritability.
8. Recent illness or hospital stay.
9. Frequently fatigued. Iron deficiencies, a result of poor nutrition, often cause fatigue. (Related: [Depression](#))
10. Brittle/dry hair or ridged nails. Because hair and nails are made up of proteins, they are both reliable indicators of poor nutrition.

## Tips on Preventing Poor Nutrition

1. Make plans to cook her dinner regularly.
2. Help her grocery shop.
3. Ensure she makes it to regular physician checkups.





# Depression

**Throughout our lives**, we feel the ups and downs of life. We sing the blues just as often as we sing for joy. However, chronic, lasting depression can have devastating effects on elderly adults. Late-life depression affects around six million adults over 65 in the U.S. As you care for your loved one, keep a close eye for the following warning signs that may indicate depression:

1. Sadness. An empty feeling that persists for long periods.
2. Fatigue. She may lack the energy she once possessed. (Related: [Poor Nutrition](#))
3. Abandoning or losing interest in hobbies or other pleasurable pastimes.
4. Social withdrawal from friends; isolation.
5. Weight loss or loss of appetite. (Related: [Poor Nutrition](#))
6. Sleep disturbances. This could be both the inability to sleep (insomnia) and trouble getting out of bed (oversleeping).
7. Loss of self-worth. Does she worry about being a burden? Have you witnessed any self-loathing behavior from her?
8. Recently lost access or connections with a supportive social network.
9. Anxiety.
10. Aches and pains that don't relent even when treated.

## Tips on Preventing Depression

1. Encourage her to exercise.
2. Ensure she connects with others.
3. Buy her a pet, which will provide companionship.



# Financial Issues

## According to the Federal Trade Commission

, consumers lose an estimated \$40 billion to fraud. Con artists single out older adults because older adults tends to have good credit, large nest eggs, and medical or mental conditions that make it difficult to discern fraudulent schemes. If you notice the following warning signs for senior fraud, act immediately before anything gets out of control.

1. Inability to pay her bills.
2. Unopened statements from brokerage accounts you've never heard of.
3. Mailboxes stuffed with sweepstakes offers or magazines she doesn't remember subscribing to.
4. Reliance on a "new best friend" for financial advice.
5. Phone ringing off the hook. A constantly ringing phone could be predatory telemarketers who have found success selling to your mom before.
6. Giving money to strange "charities."
7. Sending money to grandchildren for "problems" you're unaware of.
8. A declining bank account.
9. Purchasing living trusts from door-to-door salesmen.
10. Making financial investments over the phone.

### Tips on Preventing Fraud

1. Help her pay the bills as much as you can.
2. Sign her up for the Federal Trade Commission's Do-Not-Call-Registry (888) 382-1222



# Hearing Loss

**For adults over 65**, one in three has complications with hearing loss. The loss can range from mild to severe, but can be permanent. While hearing loss does not always precede a serious malady such as dementia, the condition should be treated seriously. When spending time with your loved one, look for the following signs to indicate problems with her hearing:

1. Complains of a ringing in the ears.
2. Often asks people to repeat themselves.
3. Keeps speakers on the TV or radio extremely loud.
4. No longer hears everyday or household sounds, such as the clock, dripping water, or the doorbell.
5. Finds telephone conversations difficult to follow.
6. Irritated that people around her don't speak up.
7. Unsure where sounds are coming from.
8. Withdraws from social activities. (Related: [Depression](#))
9. Repositions herself to listen with a dominant ear.
10. Believes people are mumbling around her.

## Quick Facts About Hearing Loss

The hearing loss experienced by older adults is called presbycusis. Presbycusis causes changes in the inner ear over time that cause a slow but continuous hearing loss. Presbycusis's effects range from mild to severe, and presbycusis is always permanent.

Source: [Hearingloss.org](https://hearingloss.org)





# Limit or Stop Driving

**Driving is as much a part of our lives as the television**, but as we age, operating a vehicle can become prohibitive to our health and safety. Keep an eye out for the following warning signs related to driving. You may need to discuss limiting or ending her driving altogether.

1. Eyesight problems.
2. Issues with hearing. (Related: [Hearing Loss](#))
3. Reduction in reflexes and range of motion.
4. Memory problems.
5. Increased citations/traffic tickets.
6. Confusion around operating the vehicle.
7. Lane drifting or straddling.
8. Getting lost frequently while driving.
9. Missing or misunderstanding traffic signs and signals.
10. Dents and scratches found on the car or garage.

## Tips on Preventing Driving Accidents

1. Arrange for her to get her eyes checked every year.
2. Have her hearing checked annually.
3. Speak with a doctor if you are concerned for her health and well-being.
4. Ensure she's sleeping well.



# One Last Warning Sign

We know the strain and stress your role as caregiver places on your shoulders. You take your position as caregiver without complaint and with no need for praise. You simply do it for the love of your mother, father, or other loved one. Yet your selflessness often comes with a cost.

**The last warning sign in this guide concerns you.** While your aging loved one needs your support as much as possible, your care is impossible if you don't first take care of yourself.

[Caregiver.org](http://Caregiver.org) reports that an estimated 40-to-70% of caregivers show significant symptoms of depression. Moreover, the stress of the job can physically wear a caregiver out with 26% admitting to the emotional burden of caring for loved ones.

## You are not alone as a caregiver.

At Five Star Senior Living, we are here to help in any way we can. Whether your loved one's need is short-term or long-term, we offer exceptional senior care. If you would like to discuss your options, email us at [info@5ssl.com](mailto:info@5ssl.com) or call us at 617-796-8387.



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# About Five Star Senior Living

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Five Star Quality Care, Inc., a national healthcare and senior living provider headquartered in Newton, Massachusetts, proudly offers the highest quality service and care with the warmth and hospitality of home. Five Star has two major operating divisions: Five Star Senior Living and Five Star Rehabilitation Services.

The Five Star Senior Living division includes more than 260 Independent Living, Assisted Living, Alzheimer's/Memory Care, Healthcare Centers with Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Retirement Communities. We also offer outpatient rehabilitation, day programs, and respite/short stay options.

Five Star is committed to maximizing your loved one's independence and enhancing her lifestyle. Residents can choose from a full complement of social, educational, wellness, cultural and spiritual programs; as well as a variety of support options. The happiness, comfort and peace of mind of our residents and families are our goals.

Learn more about Five Star Senior Living by visiting [fivestarseniorliving.com](http://fivestarseniorliving.com).

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