

Activities of Daily Living - ADL

One of the early warning signs that you or your loved one may be experiencing memory problems is the inability to perform the everyday routine tasks of daily life. This ability or inability provides a measurement of how functional a person is and helps to determine whether they are safe to be living on their own or if they need additional care and support either in the home or in a long term residential facility. Your doctor or other healthcare professional will ask about this information in order to help make a diagnosis and recommend the best care plan for the patient.

Some activities are referred to as “Instrumental Activities of Daily Living” or IADL’s. Examples of these are:

- Light housework
- Preparing meals
- Taking medications
- Shopping for groceries or clothes
- Using the telephone
- Managing money

If you note that a loved one is having trouble paying the bills, shopping or taking their meds correctly this may be a sign that some intervention is necessary. This is the time that important conversations have to take place with regard to future care. With appropriate support, a person may be able to continue to live independently or within a community setting such as an assisted care facility. Please note, difficulties in performing these tasks is not a definitive diagnosis of dementia.

For more information: http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_10_signs_of_alzheimers.asp

It becomes more problematic when someone is no longer able to perform basic “Activities of Daily Living” or ADLs. These are the routine activities that people do for themselves in normal daily living. These include:

- Bathing and personal grooming
- Dressing and undressing
- Eating
- Transferring from bed to chair, and back
- Voluntarily control of urinary and fecal discharge
- Using the toilet

The inability to perform one or more of these activities is the point when more extensive help will be required within the home or may require a move to a residential care facility.

For more information on how to help manage these progressive care issues go to:

http://caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=406