

# When to Consider Memory Care

By Jessica Derkis



**Sometimes it's a fall. Or a stove left on. Or loneliness. Unlike many illnesses, which tend to develop or emerge suddenly, dementia typically presents as a gradual decline.**

The signs can be confusing and easy to miss or misunderstood. Memory loss, confusion and disorientation are not the only signs that someone may be developing Alzheimer's or another type of dementia. Dementia symptoms can include delusions, agitation, sleeplessness and extreme personality changes that can profoundly affect what your loved one needs in a living situation.

You may need to consider memory care if you are concerned about:

**Safety:** Is your loved one getting lost in the neighborhood or taking too much or too little medication?

**Caregiver burnout:** Are you, your parent or a sibling wearing so many hats, it's becoming unmanageable?

**Neglect of hygiene:** Is the person avoiding bathing or other personal care?

**Isolation and/or depression:** Is your loved one blue or missing friends, family and formerly enjoyed activities?

**Finances:** Has your loved one been overpaying or skipping bills or a victim of fraud?

**Living conditions:** Have you noticed that the kitchen is going unused or spills gone unwiped?

These are just a few of the signs that may lead you to believe that more specialized care is required. It is a good time to get him or her seen by a capable physician and, depending on the diagnosis, it may be time to investigate whether your loved one could benefit from memory care.

Memory care communities are often specialized Assisted Living communities. Some, like Kensington Place Redwood City, offer round-the-clock nurse oversight, specific therapeutic diets and specialized training for their staff to better care for and communicate with those progressing through the stages of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.



Ideally, the person needing care is able to shop with, assist, direct or share their wishes. Many times this is not the case. Families should find out what is important to their loved one. For some, it'll be social activities and outings to reconnect to the world. For others, it might be healthy meals and friendly gatherings they may have neglected because of health and mobility issues.

Many will want to stay at home with in-home care as long as physically and financially feasible. Every person will

have his or her own priorities. Look for a community (or home care provider) that meets their needs and perhaps can try for a month or a season.

You will find valuable resources in the free Argentum Guide to Shopping for Assisted Living which includes things to look for, questions to ask and even some financial options. You will also find valuable resources in your local branch of the Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Association, Medicare.gov or by visiting Kensington Place.

As someone who has not only helped hundreds of families including six of my own family members, trust me: paying attention to the signs, having a simple conversation, knowing and

facing some of the important details before the time comes, is far better than making such critical decisions unprepared.

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*Jessica Derkis has made it her life's mission to encourage environments and attitudes that will foster happy, healthy seniors who are served with decency, dignity, respect and kindness. Check out her new community, Kensington Place of Redwood City, 650.363.9200. [kensingtonplaceredwoodcity.com](http://kensingtonplaceredwoodcity.com)*