

CATHI

**C**aregiver’s **A**nswers, **T**opics, and **H**elpful **I**nformation

In an endeavor to continually assist caregivers in their search for pertinent information regarding eldercare, our Information and Referral Specialists address topics most frequently asked questions via **C**aregiver’s **A**nswers, **T**opics, and **H**elpful **I**nformation (**CATHI**). Additionally, caregivers are invited to e-mail individual questions **caregiver2@senior-resources-guilford.org** and an Information and Referral Specialist will reply.

Dear CATHI,

**Question:** How do I know if it’s normal aging or Alzheimer’s? What’s the difference?

**Answer:** As our loved ones age a question that may come up for you and your family is how to tell the difference between “normal” cognitive changes associated with aging and those that could signal serious underlying health conditions like dementia.

Currently there is no definitive way to distinguish between benign memory slips, Alzheimer’s or another form of dementia. Consider this as a rule of thumb: misplacing the car keys occasionally is normal, while forgetting what to do with the keys is not.

Here are some additional indicators that your loved one’s declining cognitive abilities may be caused by something more serious than simple advancing of age:

* Bad Judgement (poor financial decisions, public outbursts)
* Movement Issues (stiff body movement, hunched or bent over posture)
* Loss of Inhibition (saying or doing socially inappropriate things)
* Language Issues (can’t for coherent sentences)
* Hallucinations and Delusions (seeing things that aren’t there)
* Trouble Performing Familiar Tasks (can’t remember how to get to the dr’s office)
* Memory Loss that Interrupts Daily Life (regularly forgets recent conversations)

It is ultimately up to you and your family to decide if, and when, a loved one’s cognitive issues require investigation by a medical professional.

 Adapted from Family Caring for Family by AgingCare.com

Note: This is for informational purposes only.

For referrals to community organizations in Guilford County that assist older adults and caregivers, contact Senior Resources of Guilford’s SeniorLine at (336) 333-6981 in Greensboro and Guilford Co., in High Point/Jamestown (336) 884-6981 or the Caregiver Support Specialist, at (336) 373-4816 or (336) 883-3586 in High Point.

