

Caregiver Tip #2

Millions of adults are long distance caregivers. It is often difficult to truly know the amount or type of assistance someone needs if you don't see the person regularly. Few long distance caregivers are able to spend as much time as they would like with their loved ones. The key is to use your time wisely. When visiting your loved one, be observant and consider the following:

- Is there food in the refrigerator? Is it spoiled? Is your loved one eating regular meals?
- Is your loved one bathing and grooming himself/herself?
- What is the condition of the inside and outside of the home? Any safety concerns?
- Are the bills being paid?
- Is your loved one still able to drive safely?
- Make appointments with your loved one's doctors to make a connection so that when there is an emergency you have already met the primary care physician.
- Meet the neighbors, friends and local relatives to discuss how they feel about your loved one handling day-to-day activities. Enlist their help if they are willing.
- Take time with your loved one to talk about future plans and, most important of all, enjoy activities together.

Once you have established a need for assistance, establish a list of local support contacts. The list should include family, friends, neighbors, your loved one's doctors, home care agencies and other trusted senior professionals.