Aged Care Family Checklist

A printable guide to working out the support your loved one needs, and what to do next.

1. Daily living - what can they still manage alone?

- [ ] Showering, bathing and personal grooming
- [ ] Dressing and choosing appropriate clothing
- [ ] Preparing meals and eating regularly
- [ ] Taking the right medications at the right times
- [ ] Moving safely around the home (stairs, bathroom, getting out of bed)
- [ ] Toileting and continence
- [ ] Housekeeping, laundry and shopping
- [ ] Getting to appointments and social activities

2. Safety and memory - any warning signs?

- [ ] Falls, near-falls or unexplained bruises
- [ ] Leaving the stove, taps or heater on
- [ ] Getting lost in familiar places, or wandering
- [ ] Missed bills, repeated calls, or confusion about the day or time
- [ ] Weight loss, spoiled food in the fridge, or skipping meals
- [ ] Carer stress - is the main family carer exhausted or unwell?

3. Scoring your answers

Mostly managing alone = lower-level support at home may be enough (Commonwealth Home Support Programme or a Support at Home package). Several difficulties or safety concerns = time to arrange an ACAT assessment for residential care or a higher level of home support.

4. First steps (in order)

- [ ] Register with My Aged Care: myagedcare.gov.au or 1800 200 422
- [ ] Arrange an ACAT assessment (free) through My Aged Care or your GP
- [ ] Gather documents: Medicare card, pension details, medication list, Enduring Power of Attorney
- [ ] Book tours at two or three homes - visit unannounced if you can
- [ ] Get a fee estimate with the My Aged Care fee estimator before signing anything

5. Questions to ask on a home tour

- [ ] What is the staff-to-resident ratio, including overnight and weekends?
- [ ] How do you support residents living with dementia?
- [ ] What are the room prices (RAD and DAP), and what extra fees apply?
- [ ] Can we see this week's activities calendar and today's menu?