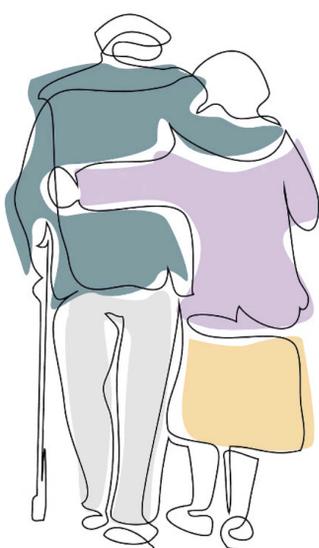


Spotting Signs of Health Deterioration

As an unpaid carer, you play a vital role in noticing early signs that something might not be right. Being aware of common signs of health deterioration can help you act quickly and seek the right support when needed. Below are key conditions to watch for, with short explanations and links to NHS guidance for more detailed information.

If you are ever concerned – reach out for support.



Call "999" for life-threatening emergencies (24 hours) such as:

- Chest pain
- Choking
- Fitting (new or prolonged)
- Severe breathing problems
- Stroke
- Unconscious
- Severe loss of blood
- Diabetic emergency (Hypoglycaemia with other symptoms such as drowsiness, or Hyperglycaemia with increased thirst and urination)
- Head injury – on anticoagulant medication

If you are not sure, call NHS 111. They can check your symptoms and tell you what to do

Start First Aid if you have been trained.



Restore 2Mini - Spotting early signs that someone you care for may be becoming unwell

Originally designed for paid care workers – RESTORE2 Mini is a simple tool that helps you notice early "soft signs" that the person you care for may be becoming unwell. It guides you to record what you're worried about and communicate it clearly to health professionals so they can respond faster. Using RESTORE2 Mini can give you more confidence in recognising when something isn't right and makes it easier to explain your concerns without needing medical knowledge.

Common Signs of Health Deterioration to Look Out For:



Sepsis

Sepsis is life threatening. It can be hard to spot. There are lots of possible symptoms. They can be like symptoms of other conditions, including flu or a chest infection.

If you think you or someone you look after has symptoms of sepsis, call 999 or go to A&E. Trust your instincts.



Urinary tract infections (UTIs)

UTIs occur when bacteria infect the urinary system, which includes the bladder and kidneys. They can cause discomfort and may lead to more serious complications if untreated. For over 65s diagnosis should be based on symptoms of infection.



Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when our bodies don't have enough water. Water helps to lubricate the joints and eyes, aids digestion, flushes out wastes and toxins, and keeps the skin healthy. Dehydration means your body loses more fluids than you take in. If it's not treated, it can get worse and become a serious problem.



Water, drinks and hydration

Most people should aim to drink enough during the day so their urine is a clear pale yellow colour. The government recommends that people should aim to drink 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid a day.



Sudden confusion (delirium)

Delirium is a sudden change in mental state, causing confusion and disorientation. It often signals an underlying health issue that needs attention. Sudden confusion can be caused by many different things. Do not try to self-diagnose. Get medical help if someone suddenly becomes confused or delirious.



Falls

Anyone can have a fall, but it's more likely if you're older or have mobility problems. Making changes to prevent falls can help you avoid injuries and keep your confidence and independence. If you fall, try to stay calm. Take a couple of minutes to check for any pain or injuries and follow NHS guidance on what to do if you can or cannot get up.



Pain

Persistent or severe pain can impact daily life and may point to an underlying condition. Pain is common and it is important to distinguish between physical pain and emotional distress to be able to help the individual and guide the appropriate treatment. Although often there is an element of both.



Constipation

Constipation is where you have changes to how you poo, including not pooing as often or finding it hard to poo. It's common and it affects people of all ages. If you're caring for an older person, or someone with dementia or a learning disability, constipation may be easily missed. Look out for any behaviour changes such as confusion, as it might mean they are in pain or discomfort.



Pressure Sores

Aging and certain conditions can make the skin more vulnerable and prone to various issues, making proper skin care essential. Maintaining good skin condition is really important; pressure ulcers can have a huge impact on person's wellbeing, causing pain, distress etc. Carers are ideally situated to monitor a person's skin condition.



High temperature (fever) in adults

A high temperature, or fever, is when the body's temperature rises above normal. It usually indicates the body is fighting an infection.



Shortness of breath

Shortness of breath might not be anything to worry about, but sometimes it can be serious and you'll need to get medical help.



Cough

A cough is a reflex that helps clear the airways. It can be caused by infections, allergies, or other conditions affecting the lungs or throat.



Diarrhoea and vomiting

Vomiting and diarrhoea involve the body expelling food and fluids rapidly. They are often caused by infections and can lead to dehydration.



Oxygen in blood levels - Pulse Oximeter

Oxygen levels show how much oxygen is in the blood. A pulse oximeter is a small device that measures this and might be advised by a clinician.



High blood pressure

High blood pressure is very common, especially in older adults and means the force of blood against the artery walls is too high. It often develops without symptoms but can increase health risks over time.