

GROWING OLDER

Happy, healthy parents

Sometimes an aging parent is reluctant to accept help from an adult child, even when the parent could use it.

Although you have the best intentions, your parents may not want to discuss problems that may affect their health and independence. So you'll need to approach the subject with sensitivity.

Make plans together Unless your parents have signs of mental decline that would affect their ability to make decisions, it's best to avoid making plans without their knowledge and consent.

Instead, approach your parents with an attitude of listening, not telling. For example, "Have you thought about what you will want to do if you need more help?" as opposed to, "We really need to talk about a plan if you get sick."

Your conversation may progress to specific suggestions, such as, "Do you think you might want a hand with some of the housekeeping or shopping?"

Ask if your parents have considered changes at home that make it easier and safer to live there or if they prefer another choice, such as moving into an assisted living situation.

Offer to gather information that



will help your parents make decisions or find ways to achieve their long-term goals.

Stay involved To help maximize your parents' independence and health, encourage them to: ➤ Seek medical care when it's needed. Offer to take them to the doctor if they

that might be affected by diet, you might consider consulting a dietitian. If your parents take supplements (such as vitamins), ask if the doctor approves. ➤ Take part in regular exercise, with a doctor's approval. Exercise helps maintain the strength, balance, flexibility, and endurance needed for daily activities such as carrying groceries or climbing stairs. ➤ Stay involved with family and friends, and participate in community activities. You may need to accompany your parents or arrange for transportation. ➤ Keep an active mind by reading, playing games, and using a computer. ➤ Ask for help (if needed) with chores, such as cleaning and yard work.

Sources: AARP Foundation; U.S. Administration on Aging

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don't want to go alone. Check to see if they are taking medicines as the doctor prescribed. ➤ Eat a healthful diet. If your parents have health issues