

The Top Questions to Ask Before Dad

Moves In

One of the most noble and admirable decisions adult children can make is to open up their home to an aging parent. Our parents raised and cared for us when we needed assistance, so it seems like a no-brainer to reciprocate when it becomes unsafe for Dad to live alone. But there are a number of factors to think through before taking this step. CareWorks Health Services outlines some of the key questions to consider:

Do you have sufficient space? If setting up a room for Dad will result in shuffling the kids' accommodations, such as doubling up siblings to share a room or requiring someone to sleep on the couch, it's important to weigh this disruption against the benefits to the senior.

Are home modifications needed? Walk through the home and try to view it from the perspective of an older adult. Are pathways clear between the senior's bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, etc.? Are there any tripping hazards, such as throw rugs? Do you need to install grab bars, an elevated toilet seat, or other home medical equipment? Are there stairs to maneuver? Is the home wheelchair-accessible?

Will someone be at home throughout the day? Isolation and the dangers of being alone will still be an issue if you and your spouse are working outside of the home.

Is everyone fully on board with the decision? While you may be fully committed to your aging parent's new living arrangements, feelings of reluctance or resentment on the part of your spouse can create tension and relationship difficulties.

Are you prepared to manage increasing care needs? While Dad may need just a little extra assistance now, disease progression and the normal frailties associated with aging will change the level of care needed in time. Consider such potential complications as incontinence, bathing difficulties, wandering, and falls.

Another consideration is the impact that giving up status as "head of the household" can cause, as it is extremely difficult for some older adults. It will take some advance thoughtful planning to determine how to best help the senior maintain dignity, independence and a sense of control.