

# Orange County Department on Aging (OCDoA)

## Aging in Place Checklist

### Preparing Your Home/Living Space

- Bathrooms
  - Can a walker or wheelchair fit into the bathroom?
  - Do you have handholds near the toilet?
  - Consider raising the height of your toilet or purchasing a toilet seat riser.
  - Shower/Bathtub
    - Can you safely enter and exit the tub or shower? Consider switching to a walk-in model and/or installing grab bars.
    - Consider changing glass shower door to non-shattering material or curtain.
    - Use a shower bench or shower chair & install a handheld shower head.
- Technology
  - Wear a medical alert system or smart watch with fall detection.
  - Consider voice activated devices to help control lighting and climate control, like Alexa or Google Home.
  - Is there a phone within reach in case of a fall?
- Bedroom
  - Is there a clear walking path between the bedside and bathroom?
  - Can you easily get into and out of bed?
- Exterior of Home
  - How will you enter/exit your home if steps become a challenge?
  - Do you have an even walking path between your home and car area?
  - Have a plan in place for how to maintain the yard & exterior of home.
- General
  - Are there handrails next to every stair/step?
  - Is there a living space, kitchen, bathroom, & laundry on the ground level?
  - Consider how to widen halls & doorways to accommodate a wheelchair or walker.
  - Avoid shag carpeting and secure all rugs with tape or a slip resistant backing.
  - Ensure light switches are easily accessible and provide ample lighting.
  - Be sure important activities are within easy reach. Consider keeping most-used kitchen items near counter height, raised planter boxes in the garden, or sitting in a chair when transitioning laundry at a front-loading washer and dryer.
  - Who will perform regular home maintenance (vacuuming/cleaning the floors, changing air filters, calling the plumber, taking the trash out, etc.?)
- Suggested Resources
  - For Orange County Residents an OT can make a safety assessment with personalized suggestions for your home, call the Aging Helpline if interested.
  - The Orange County Home Preservation Coalition can provide assistance with home modifications: [Home Preservation Coalition \(orangecountync.gov\)](http://orangecountync.gov).
  - [How to Choose a Medical Alert System - Consumer Reports](#).
  - [HomeFit Guide \(aarp.org\)](http://aarp.org).



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## Physical Health

- General
  - How will your medications be managed? Who will pick up medications?
  - Do you have a Primary Care Physician? A Geriatrician? A Dentist?
  - Do you have a walker, wheelchair, or transport chair?
  - Do you have clothing that is easy to take on and off (no complicated zippers, buttons, or belts)?
- Diagnosis Specific
  - Is the disease progressive? What does the progression typically look like?
  - Look into support groups for individuals with a similar diagnosis.
- Suggested Resources
  - The OCDoA can loan DME (such as walkers, chairs, etc.) & provide incontinence supplies on a limited basis.
  - [UNC Geriatrics Specialty Clinic.](#)
  - [Duke Geriatric Medicine.](#)

## Mental and Social Health

- Maintain and build on existing social connections.
- Consider seeing a mental health provider or joining a support group if you are struggling with Depression, Anxiety, or any number of mental health concerns.
- Join us at the Seymour or Passmore Center for wellness activities, engagement programs, social groups, and various support groups.
- Suggested Resources
  - List of various programs available through the Department on Aging: [Endless Possibilities | Resource Guide | Orange County, NC \(orangecountync.gov\).](#)
  - Orange County volunteering opportunities and programs: [Volunteer Connect 55+](#)
  - [Duke Dementia Family Support Program.](#)
  - The Aging Transitions team at Orange County has licensed therapists who can provide brief counseling, call 919-968-2087 for more information.
  - [Silver Linings for Seniors](#) specializes in counseling for seniors and caregivers 919-948-7718.
  - Visit [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com) to find a comprehensive list of NC based therapists.

## In-Home Care

- Research different types of in-home care (Home Health Aide vs. Companion Care, etc.).
- Learn about local agencies & private aids, pricing, availability, services provided.
- Consider hiring a care manager or care coordinator to assist with these services.
- Suggested Resources
  - You can search for local aging life care specialists/care managers at [aginglifecare.org](http://aginglifecare.org).

For more information about programs and community resources visit the [OCDoA Website](#), call the Aging Helpline at 919-968-2087, or email [agingtransitions@orangecountync.gov](mailto:agingtransitions@orangecountync.gov)

# OCDoA Aging in Place Checklist

## In-Home Care cont.

- The OCDoA has several articles and flyers providing information about different types of home care and tips on how to successfully work with home care services as well as a directory of private in-home caregivers who have been screened by the department on the [Aging Transitions Website](#).
- The following are three local in home care agencies, for a complete list of local agencies see the OCDoA [Resource Guide](#):
  - [Homewatch Caregivers of the Triangle](#) 919-960-6038.
  - [Visiting Angels](#): 919-646-3737.
  - [Right at Home](#): 919-237-2333.

## Finances

- Do you have long term care insurance?
- Do you have a financial planner?
- If still working, when do you plan to retire?
- Who will pay the bills and manage your personal finances?
- What costs of care can Medicare cover? Your private insurance?
- Suggested Resources
  - A free appointment with a Medicare SHIP Counselor can be made with the OCDoA to discuss Medicare options and coverages: 919-245-4274.
  - [Retirement Financial Planning Checklist \(AgingInPlace.org\)](#).
  - [WISER Retirement Planning Resources – \(WISERWomen.org\)](#).

## Legal Documents to Complete & Research

- DNR/MOST Forms or other Advance Healthcare Directives.
- Financial Power of Attorney & designate an Authorized Agent.
- Healthcare Power of Attorney & designate a Medical Proxy.
- Last Will & Testament.
- Power of Attorney, Durable Power of Attorney, & Healthcare Power of Attorney.
- Suggested Resources
  - Orange County residents can receive a wearable bracelet with a digital copy of their DNR and/or MOST form.
  - The OCDoA has notaries that can assist with notarizing legal forms.
  - [Legal Document Checklist for Aging Parents \(seniorsafetyadvice.com\)](#).
  - [National Academy of Elder Law lawyer listing \(naela.org\)](#).

## Meals & Meal Assistance

- Do you have ready access to recipes that are simple and easy to make?
- Where will you get groceries and/or prepared meals?
- Are there local meal delivery options?
- Suggested Resources
  - [Meals on Wheels Orange County | \(mowocnc.org\)](#).



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## Meals & Meal Assistance cont.

- [Food Bank Finder - Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina \(foodbankcenc.org\).](#)
- [Senior Nutrition — Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.](#)
- Both the Seymour & Passmore Senior Centers offer free lunches for Orange county residents 60+ and for a \$6 fee for anyone under the age of 60. Contact the Lunch Program Coordinator at: 919-245-4256 for information and to register.
- If you have limited financial means you may qualify for a monthly food package. Call the Aging Helpline at 919-968-2087 for more information.

## Transportation/Moving Around Town

- Is your car easy to get in and out of?
- What is your plan if you are no longer able to drive?
- Is there public transportation available where you live? Is it accessible to you?
- Suggested Resources
  - The OCDoA Transportation Specialist can be reached here: 919-717-1853 and can assist with transportation needs and questions.

## Pets

- Who will care for your pet if you are no longer able to keep them in your house or you have to be out of the home for an extended time due to medical reasons?
- Can you transport your pet to the veterinarian?
- Suggested Resources
  - [AgingInPlace.org-Seniors and Pets.](#)

## Moving Out of Your Home

- If your current home/living space is not conducive to aging in place consider downsizing into a new home.
- Research local 55+ communities or aging in place friendly neighborhoods.
- Explore Assisted Living Facilities or Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) as alternative living options if/when aging in your home is no longer viable. Ask facilities about costs and wait times for admittance, it can be beneficial to get on a wait list well before you plan on moving in.
- Suggested Resources
  - Older adult friendly Orange County housing information can be found on the [Aging Transitions Website](#) and by calling the Orange County Housing Helpline at 919-245-2655.
  - [Consumer Guide on Assisted Living Facilities \(ahcancal.org\).](#)
  - The OCDoA has counselors who can provide Options Counseling when considering a move or major transition to assist in identifying local resources and helping decide your next best steps.

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