

Maryland Judiciary
Signs of Neglect

Neglect is a caregiver's refusal or failure to provide for a person's basic needs, which include food, water, clothing, and shelter, as well as personal hygiene, medication, comfort, and personal safety. In this video, we'll talk about the signs of neglect.

Neglect may be passive or intentional. Passive neglect occurs when a caregiver is unable to fulfill their obligations to another person because of illness, disability, stress, misunderstanding of what care or services are needed, or lack of resources. Intentional neglect occurs when a caregiver is able to fulfill those obligations, but refuses to. Neglectors may be family members, paid caregivers, or employees of care facilities.

There are many signs of neglect. One is poor hygiene, including lice, scabies, severe or untreated rashes or wounds, or bed sores. Malnutrition or dehydration may also indicate a problem. Look out for hazardous or unsafe living conditions, such as exposed or improper wiring, no heat, poor plumbing, and unsanitary conditions like dirt, fleas, bed bugs, lice, soiled bedding, and fecal or urine odors. Other signs of neglect include unsuitable or missing clothing, or a lack of basic medical care or medications. Consider possible neglect if you notice a person has signs of exposure to the elements, like excessive sunburn, insect bites, or cold, or if they demonstrate behaviors that aren't age-appropriate, such as bedwetting, wetting, or soiling.

Remember, neglect is the refusal or failure to provide for a person's basic needs, and it can be intentional or passive. Keep an eye out for the signs of neglect.