The Holiday Home Check Kit

A parent-led checklist and 7-day family plan. Fill it in together, and leave with help your parent actually wants.

Fresh Tech Maid

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A companion to "Home for the holidays: What to look for in your aging parent's home" by Wells Ye. November 2026.

How to use this kit

- [ ] Ask your parent if they'd like to walk through the house together
- [ ] Let them choose the rooms and the time
- [ ] Agree that nothing gets moved without their okay
- [ ] Ask before taking photos or sharing notes with relatives

How to mark each item

Mark	Means	Do
G (green)	Fine as it is	Nothing for now
Y (yellow)	Needs attention soon	Pick one or two to fix
R (red)	A safety concern	Fix it first
NC / NA	Not checked / doesn't apply	Leave it

No total score: one red item matters more than ten greens. This is a household conversation, not a medical or memory assessment.

What your colors mean

Result	What to do this week
All green	Keep the list; check again next visit
Some yellow	Pick one or two your parent agrees to
Any red	Fix it first: a repair, a cleaning job or a call
A fall, unsteadiness or fear of falling	Talk to the doctor. After a fall with a head hit, see a doctor right away.

Instead of saying… try saying

Instead of	Try
You need help.	Would someone else handling the floors make things easier?
This place is a hazard.	I noticed the rug by the door is curling.
You can't do this anymore.	What's the hardest chore right now?
I've hired a cleaner.	Want to try one visit and see what you think?
You're being stubborn.	What worries you about having someone help?

The holiday home check

Area	Item	G	Y	R	Red if…	Your parent's words
Floors and stairs	Main paths are clear of clutter, cords and furniture	G	Y	R	Something blocks a main path	
Floors and stairs	No loose throw rugs or small area rugs	G	Y	R	A loose rug on a main path	
Floors and stairs	Stairs have handrails and good light	G	Y	R	No rail or a dark staircase	
Kitchen	No expired or spoiled food in the fridge	G	Y	R	Spoiled food in use	
Kitchen	Stovetop free of grease; nothing that burns near burners	G	Y	R	Grease or burnables by burners	
Kitchen	Everyday items on waist-high shelves	G	Y	R	Step stool used for everyday items	
Bathroom	Grab bars by the toilet and tub or shower	G	Y	R	No support where it's needed	
Bathroom	Floor and tub aren't slippery	G	Y	R	Slick tub or floor	
Bathroom	No mildew building up	G	Y	R		
High cleaning	Your parent isn't climbing to clean	G	Y	R	Climbing ladders or stools to clean	
High cleaning	High surfaces, fans and fixtures are dusted	G	Y	R		
High cleaning	Floors are vacuumed and mopped	G	Y	R		
Products and air	Products stored safely and clearly labeled	G	Y	R		
Products and air	Rooms ventilated when cleaning	G	Y	R		
Products and air	Few or no air fresheners or scented products	G	Y	R		
Housework	Laundry, dishes and trash keeping up	G	Y	R		
Housework	Mail and bills not piling up	G	Y	R		
Housework	Tidiness about the same as last visit	G	Y	R		

Sources: CDC Check for Safety and fall-prevention guidance; National Institute on Aging; FoodSafety.gov; U.S. Fire Administration; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; EPA; American Lung Association; Eldercare Locator.

Priority fixes

What we found	What Mom or Dad prefers	Next step	Who	By when	Done

Who does what

Decision	Parent	Adult child	Provider
Choose the service			
Priorities and private rooms			
Pay			
Schedule visits			
First-visit walk-through			
Feedback after visits			

Questions to ask any cleaning provider

The work

- [ ] Are tasks customized to my parent's needs?
- [ ] Can the scope go up or down as needs change?
- [ ] Are floors and high surfaces included?
- [ ] Is the scope in writing?

Products, people and family

- [ ] Do your products have added fragrance?
- [ ] Are cleaners employees or contractors?
- [ ] Are you registered, bonded and insured?
- [ ] Can I call references?
- [ ] Can a family member attend the first visit, get updates and give feedback?

Your 7-day plan

Before you leave

- [ ] Agree on one or two actions
- [ ] Note who does each one

Days 1-2

- [ ] Confirm who does what
- [ ] Book any doctor talk about falls

Days 3-5

- [ ] Quick fixes: waist-high shelves, brighter bulbs
- [ ] Book help or a quote

Days 6-7 and day 30

- [ ] Ask your parent how it's going
- [ ] Keep each task open until it's done
- [ ] Check in again at 30 days

Help if you live far away

Eldercare Locator (national)	1-800-677-1116
Chicago: Department of Family and Support Services (Area Agency on Aging)	312-746-5682
Suburban Cook County: AgeOptions	708-383-0258

Sources: Better Business Bureau (2020); EPA Safer Choice; CDC (fall prevention, 2017-2026); Administration for Community Living; Illinois Department on Aging (2026). General information, not medical advice. © 2026 Fresh Tech Maid · freshtechmaids.com