

Elder at Home Independence Guide



UltraCall
CODA

About this guide

If you're reading this guide, you're probably concerned about an elderly or vulnerable loved one living alone. The good news is there's a LOT you can do to support them (even from afar) so you can enjoy more good years together with greater peace of mind.

This guide is for you if:

- You're looking for simple, practical ways to support an older parent or loved one to keep living well independently.
- Your whanāu member is still well enough to be living alone but could use a little extra support.
- You want to provide support but without constantly hovering or intruding on their privacy and independence.
- You're interested in finding out how technology can help keep loved ones keep living well at home for longer.



**Dr Bev Nicolls - Medical Advisor,
CODA (Check On Daily Activities)**



This guide is intended for carers/relatives of a more vulnerable person and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. For any serious concerns, please speak to your healthcare professional.

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Section one:

The risks of living alone

For many older adults, living alone brings comfort, privacy, and independence. But it also carries hidden risks – especially when small health issues or changes in behavior go unnoticed.

Common risks include:

- Falls or injuries with no one around to help
- Missed medications or incorrect doses
- Sudden infections like flu or COVID causing inactivity or confusion
- Memory loss or cognitive decline
- Social isolation and depression
- Complications after surgery or illness
- The “I’m fine” reflex – not wanting to burden others, even when struggling

These risks often don't look serious – until it's too late.

According to Age Concern New Zealand, one in three New Zealanders over 65 will have a fall each year and for those over 80, it rises to one in two.



Jess's story

Jess's mum Emma was a strong, independent, capable woman but in her early eighties, Jess noticed she was beginning to struggle with little things like walking to the store, keeping up with appointments and taking care of the garden. Jess and her siblings wanted to help more but didn't want to over-step.

They hired a gardener and did their best to check in on their mum regularly, but they were also busy with their own lives.

Jess and her siblings talked to Emma about moving to a retirement village or granny flat but Emma wasn't keen. She valued her independence and didn't want to leave her much-loved home. They looked into hiring caregivers but were shocked when they discovered the costs.

Guilt started to creep in for everyone. Emma felt guilty about disrupting her children's lives by asking for help so she would tell them, "I'm fine," while the children felt guilty about not doing more.

Fortunately, Jess was alerted to a potential solution - UltraCall CODA by a doctor friend. At first, Emma had some concerns about privacy but once she realised it was a sensor-based system with no video or audio recordings, she agreed to give it a try.

Jess's brother put the CODA sensors up at Emma's home and Jess started receiving notifications on her phone via the CODA app.

Jess later invited her siblings to join the app and they created a small community around Emma. With each of them receiving updates, they could easily communicate with each other and take turns to step in.

Late one night Emma lost her balance in the bathroom and couldn't get up. The sensors detected the unusual lack of movement and notified her children. Jess called emergency services while another sibling rushed over. The swift response eased the pressure on everyone.

After installing CODA, Emma felt more secure in her health and more connected with her children, without compromising her independence. As for Jess and her siblings, they had peace of mind knowing Mum was okay.

Section two:

Why prevention is better than emergency response

Most families react after something bad happens. But the best care happens early, when small signs are caught before they become emergencies.

- Emergency care is expensive, traumatic, and stressful.
- Preventative care is proactive, calm, and much more effective.

The earlier you can detect a change, the more control you have to help – without making your parent feel watched or dependent.



Early action saves lives

When it comes to your parent's health, time matters. Small issues can quickly become serious if help is delayed. Acting early not only prevents emergencies but can save lives. **Why Acting Fast Makes a Difference:**

Heart Health



Delays in diagnosing or treating heart failure – whether sudden or ongoing – can lead to:

- Increased risk of death
- Longer hospital stays
- Higher chance of ending up back in hospital

Act early: Timely treatment slows disease progression and improves quality of life.

Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)



Delaying or skipping treatment for UTIs in older adults can cause:

- Bloodstream infections
- Increased hospital admissions
- Greater risk of death

Act early: Prompt antibiotics significantly reduce complications and save lives.

Falls



If someone lies injured after a fall without help, outcomes get worse:

- Higher injury severity
- Longer hospital and intensive care stays
- More complications and ventilator days
- Higher mortality

Act early: Rapid response after a fall improves recovery chances.

Depression



When depression in older people goes untreated, symptoms often persist and worsen, raising risks of cognitive decline, poor physical health, and even premature death.

Act early: Early treatment with therapy or medication greatly improves recovery and wellbeing.

Section three:

Early warning signs you shouldn't ignore

Even if your parent insists they're fine, small behavioral changes can reveal much more. Here are ten subtle signs that may indicate something is going wrong:

- Staying in bed longer than usual
- Slower replies to texts or phone calls
- Difficulty recalling recent conversations
- Missed appointments or unpaid bills
- Less movement around the house
- Skipping meals or relying on snacks
- Avoiding friends, groups, or social outings
- Unexplained bruises or small injuries
- Medication left untaken
- A gut feeling that something's just... off

Even just two or three of these signs could suggest that your parent needs more support.



Margaret's story

When Margaret wasn't able to contact her elderly brother, who lives on his own in another city one evening, she feared the worst.

As it turned out, she needn't have worried: He was simply engrossed in his favourite TV show with his headphones on and hadn't heard the phone! However following this and another incident, Margaret and the family did two things: they bought him a cell phone and purchased UltraCall CODA – "so it was a double whammy for him!" jokes Margaret.

Margaret and the family didn't feel that a traditional pendant alarm would be suitable for her brother, as he would likely forget to wear it, or have it nearby. So, when they heard about UltraCall CODA they thought it sounded ideal.

"It's an amazing device and I was able to put the two small sensor boxes up myself with some tiny screws into the wall," says Margaret. "They are hardly noticeable and just blend into the decor."

Once her brother was reassured he wasn't being 'watched', he was happy to have it in the house and now enjoys knowing that he is safer should he become unwell, or have an accident.

Margaret says the CODA notifications are useful for spotting changes to patterns of behaviour, enabling the family to take action early.

"It means we can check he's okay based on facts. Sometimes if you ask, people don't always tell their relatives the truth. They'll just say, 'I'm fine!'"

For Margaret's family, the greatest benefit of CODA comes from knowing their loved one is safe and well and 'living in the way that you'd hope.'

"It's almost like being in the house with him. We can be aware, without any intrusion, of the state of his health.

"It's that peace of mind and reassurance that if there's a change in his health or an unusual event, we'll be automatically notified. If we didn't have CODA, we'd just be a little more nervous about him."

Section four:

What you can do right now to help your loved one stay well

1. Start a daily check-in routine

- Call or text at the same time each day
- Keep it short – 2 to 5 minutes
- Use simple questions:
 - "What did you have for lunch?"
 - "Have you taken your meds?"
 - "How are you feeling today?"

Even quick conversations help you detect changes in energy, memory, or mood.



2. Make regular visits in person

If you live nearby, aim for weekly or fortnightly visits. During visits, notice:

- Is the home clean and safe?
- Are medications being taken?
- Is food fresh and available?
- Are they well-groomed and dressed?

A messy home or changes in routine can be early signs of decline.

3. Use a weekly wellness checklist

Create a shared document with siblings or other carers. Track:

- Medications taken
- No new injuries
- Meals eaten
- Mood and memory steady
- House clean and safe
- Social contact (phone calls, outings)

Sharing the load helps everyone stay connected and reduces stress.

4. Build a circle of support

Ask neighbours or friends to check in occasionally. Reach out to:

- Church or community groups such as Age Concern
- Meals on Wheels or volunteer visitors
- Friends your parent trusts
- Local health support teams

Sometimes your parent will open up more to others than to family.

5. Be extra cautious during flu, Covid or recovery

- Even a minor infection or recent surgery can increase risk.
- Encourage regular movement (even walking around the house)
- Know the signs of infection (fatigue, confusion, loss of appetite)
- Have a call list if your parent goes quiet for too long
- Stay extra connected during flu season
- These small actions can prevent major health events.

Section five:

Make life easier around the home

Supporting your parent's independence doesn't mean they have to do everything alone. A few small changes can make day-to-day life safer, easier, and less stressful – for both of you.

1. Remove falls hazards

Falls are one of the biggest risks for older adults, but many hazards can be fixed quickly.

- Check for loose mats, cords across walkways, and slippery concrete paths.
- Apply non-slip mats in bathrooms and showers.
- Arrange for outdoor areas to be water-blasted or resurfaced if moss or algae is making them slippery.
- Add sturdy handrails by steps or pathways.

2. Simplify house and garden maintenance

A well-maintained home is safer and more comfortable, but keeping up with chores can be overwhelming.

- Hire a trusted cleaner or explore free cleaning services through your parent's GP or local support services.
- Arrange regular help with lawns, gardens, and minor repairs – or ask neighbours and family to share the load.
- Schedule seasonal maintenance (gutter cleaning, window washing) so nothing builds up.

3. Take the stress out of meals

Eating well is crucial for energy and recovery, but cooking can become difficult. If cooking is not something your parent enjoys, you can:

- Look into Meals on Wheels or other meal delivery services.
- Help them set up an easy online grocery order with a recurring list.
- Batch-cook freezer-friendly meals together when you visit.

4. Support appointments and transport

Getting to appointments can be challenging, especially if driving is no longer an option.

- Apply for a Total Mobility Card for discounted taxi fares if they can no longer drive.
- Utilise trusted transport services like Driving Miss Daisy or other companion driving services.
- Offer to share a calendar with siblings or family so someone is always available for pick-ups.

5. Make daily living easier

Small upgrades can make a big difference.

- Install brighter lighting in hallways and staircases.
- Add grab bars in bathrooms and beside the bed.
- Ensure commonly used items are within easy reach to avoid bending or climbing.
- Consider simple tech aids – like big-button phones or easy-to-use remotes.

6. Keep them socially connected

Loneliness can impact health as much as physical risks.

- Schedule regular outings, even short ones like a coffee date or a walk.
- Help them join local groups or community activities. In many areas Age Concern run great activities for seniors.
- Encourage video calls with family, especially if you can't visit often.

7. Build a safety net

Think ahead about what will help them stay at home confidently.

- Create a list of trusted contacts (family, neighbours, local services).
- Have a plan for who checks in during holidays or if you're away.
- Talk with their GP about mobility aids or home safety assessments.



Section six:

Introducing CODA – A smarter way to care

If you've read this far, you're clearly the kind of person who wants to do the right thing. And while regular check-ins help, you might still be wondering:

- *What if I miss something?*
- *What if they say they're fine... and they're not?*
- *What happens when I'm too busy – or out of reach?*

That's where UltraCall CODA comes in.

What is UltraCall CODA?

UltraCall CODA is an intelligent hands-free wellbeing system designed to help families quietly support elderly or vulnerable people living alone. The intelligent sensors provide real-time insights into your loved one's health and daily routines through an easy-to-use app. No cameras, no wearables, and no hassle. CODA stands for **Check On Daily Activities**.

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How it works

- Two small devices (about the size of a smartphone) are placed on shelves or walls in the home.
- CODA assesses your loved one's health state and monitors daily movement and routine – without cameras, wearables, or apps.
- When something's off – like no movement in the morning – CODA sends an alert to you or another caregiver.
- Every surface becomes a call for help button – the system listens for a series of knocks or shouts and automatically generates a call for help notification.
- The CODA App shows how things are in a simple, easy-to-use dashboard.



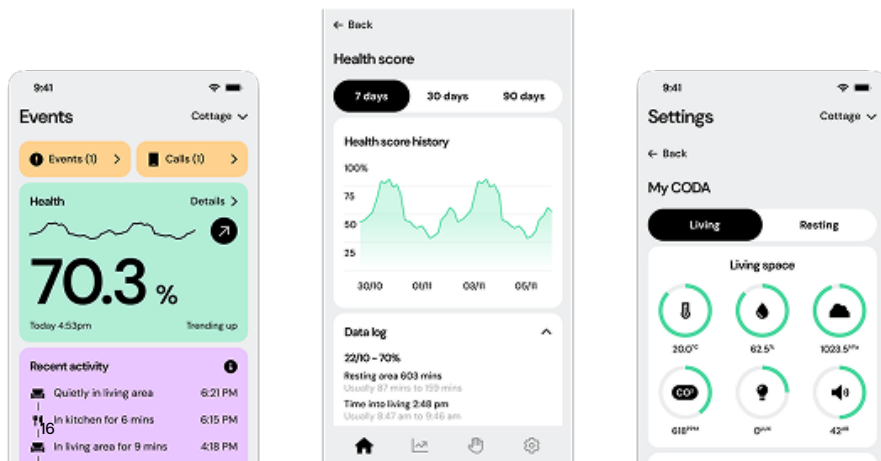
**No effort required from your parent.
No tech stress. Just daily peace of mind.**



Section seven:

What CODA can tell you with AI-powered insight

UltraCall CODA doesn't just detect movement – it uses a suite of sensors to learn your loved one's routine and builds a picture of what's "normal." Over time, CODA's AI recognises subtle changes that might go unnoticed by family or caregivers. It works straight out of the box, no batteries, no wearables, no cameras, no internet, no phone needed in the home. It's like having an extra set of eyes and intuition in the home – one that works quietly, respectfully, and continuously.



CODA'S Daily Health Score

Each day, UltraCall CODA generates a simple health score based on your loved one's usual activity patterns. If that score begins to drop – even gradually – you're notified through the CODA app.

This score is based on:

- Movement patterns throughout the home
- Sleep and wake time
- Night-time sleep disruptions
- Kitchen usage
- Time spent in each room
- Night-time wandering
- Morning, afternoon and night routine consistency
- Response to recovery after illness or surgery

What happens when something changes?

CODA sends notifications about any changes in daily routines or abnormalities. You can customise how you receive these notifications—whether through the CODA app, SMS, or email.

Notifications are designed to keep you informed without overwhelming you, ensuring you can step in when needed while giving your loved one space, and you can have as many carers (users) on the app as you need.

It might be:

- "Mum hasn't left the bedroom by 11:00am."
- "Reduced movement detected over 3 days."
- "Increased bathroom visits overnight – could indicate an infection."
- "Dad's overall health score has dropped 15% compared to last week."

This allows you to act early – maybe with a call, a visit, or a quick chat with their GP.

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Call for help function

- UltraCall CODA'S "call for help" feature allows households to set a specific pattern or noise—such as knocking or shouting—that will trigger an immediate alert to any or all caregivers and first responders.
- This function can be customised based on the household's needs and provides peace of mind, ensuring that caregivers are notified instantly when help is required. Every hard surface in the house effectively becomes a call button!

Why families love CODA

- You're no longer guessing if something's wrong
- You don't have to hover or constantly check in
- You're notified before things escalate
- It respects your parent's privacy and autonomy
- It's like having a virtual carer – but without the intrusiveness
- CODA turns daily movement into meaningful insight – giving you the information you need to care without being overbearing.



"CODA gives me great peace of mind about Dad as I'm often away.

The app lets me know if there is anything unusual in his health that I need to ask about."

–Karen B

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"The sensors are so discreet, and my dad doesn't even notice them. It's great knowing that I'll be notified if something's wrong without needing to check in every day."

–Mark, Caregiver

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More years at home. More peace of mind together.



[Book your free 15-minute Peace of Mind call](#)

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