



# Older Michiganians Day

## Complaint Tips

### Potential indicators of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation

Knowing when to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult is often difficult. This is especially true given that an adult is able to make decisions or engage in activities that others believe are causing harm if that adult is able to understand the risks and consequences of their actions/behaviors. Below are some commonly accepted indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation which may suggest a vulnerable adult is being or is at risk of being harmed. Please note that the indicators listed are not the only possible indicators that may be present and do not always mean a vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected or exploited.

## Abuse

### Physical

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, black eyes, welts, grip marks.
- Broken bones, sprains, dislocations.
- Open wounds, untreated wounds, puncture marks.

### Emotional

- Exclusion of adult from major personal decisions.
- Adult is threatened or belittled by caregiver.
- Adult is withdrawn and non-communicative or non-responsive despite the ability to do so.

### Sexual

- Genital bruises, bruises around breasts.
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases.
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.



# Neglect

## Caregiver Neglect

- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bedsores, poor hygiene, unattended or treated health problems.
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions.
- Unsanitary living conditions (fleas, lice, soiled bedding, etc.).

## Emotional

- Not attending to adult, ignoring needs or calls for help.
- Isolation from outside world; cut off contact with relatives, friends, loved ones; doesn't allow adult to use phone, email, television, etc.
- Doesn't allow adult to engage in interesting activities or activities they previously enjoyed.

## Self-neglect


- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated or improperly treated medical conditions.
- Poor hygiene.
- Unsafe or unsanitary living conditions.
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for weather; lack of needed medical aids or medications.

# Exploitation

## Of the person

- Manipulating a vulnerable adult to engage in activities they would not normally do and that only benefit the exploiter (such as criminal activity, sexual acts).

## Financial

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices.
  - Missing checks that are not recorded in the check register and the adult is unaware of what their use.
  - Unexplained disappearance of valuables.
  - Substandard care or neglect of needs despite availability of adequate funding.
  - Unexplained, sudden transfer of assets to another person.
  - Not allowed to speak up or make personal decisions despite being able to do so.
  - Fear of eviction or institutionalization if money not given to a specific person.
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# Complaint Process

A report of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect or exploitation may be made by any individual who has reasonable cause to suspect a vulnerable adult has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by abuse, neglect or exploitation. To report to the Department of Human Services:

1. Call toll-free 800-996-6228 or your local DHS office. To find an office go to [www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs) and click on "County Offices."
2. An Adult Protective Services specialist will contact the alleged victim or someone who knows him or her well (but who did not file the complaint) within 24 hours.
3. The alleged victim will be contacted within 72 hours.
4. If the alleged victim is believed to be in imminent danger, APS specialists move swiftly to address the concerns.

