

What are possible indicators of abuse and neglect?

The following descriptions are not necessarily proof of abuse or neglect, but they may be clues that a problem exists.

Physical Signs

- Unexplained bruises, black eyes, welts or burns
- Bone fractures, skull fractures
- History of unexplained falls or minor injuries or multiple injuries in various stages of healing

Behavioral Signs

- Fear, anxiety, agitation or anger
- Noncommunicative, depressed, nonresponsive or withdrawn
- Subservient or anxious to please

Common signs of neglect

- Dehydration and/or malnutrition
- Any stage of untreated bedsores
- Lack of proper medication and/or medical treatment
- Inadequate hygiene
- Overgrown hair and nails
- Unclean clothing and bed linens

To report suspected incidents of neglect or abuse of a vulnerable adult:

If you suspect that abuse is currently occurring and immediate assistance is necessary, contact local law enforcement. You should also contact:

- The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Maryland Office of the Attorney General 410-576-6521; medicaidfraud@oag.state.md.us
- Your local State's Attorney's Office (A list can be found at <http://www.mdsaa.org/marylandstatesattorneys.html>)

If you have complaints about the care received by residents at nursing homes or assisted living facilities, you may also contact the Office of Health Care Quality at 410-402-8100.



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PROTECTING OUR VULNERABLE ADULTS



Learn How We Can Detect and
Prevent the Abuse and Neglect of
Maryland's Vulnerable Adults

**Maryland Office of the
Attorney General
Medicaid Fraud Control Unit**

It is a troubling fact that the abuse and neglect of elderly and vulnerable adults is escalating in our communities. Even more troubling is that for every case of abuse that is reported to authorities, experts estimate that as many as five cases go unreported.

What is the role of the Maryland Office of the Attorney General?

In Maryland, it is a crime to abuse or neglect a vulnerable adult. The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Office of the Attorney General investigates and prosecutes incidents of abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults. The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit has successfully prosecuted individuals working in the health care industry, obtaining jail sentences for the worst offenders.

Who is a vulnerable adult?

People over the age of 18 who lack the physical or mental capacity to provide for their daily needs are vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults live in the community in their own homes, in other residential settings or in healthcare facilities. Not all vulnerable adults are senior citizens.

What is abuse?

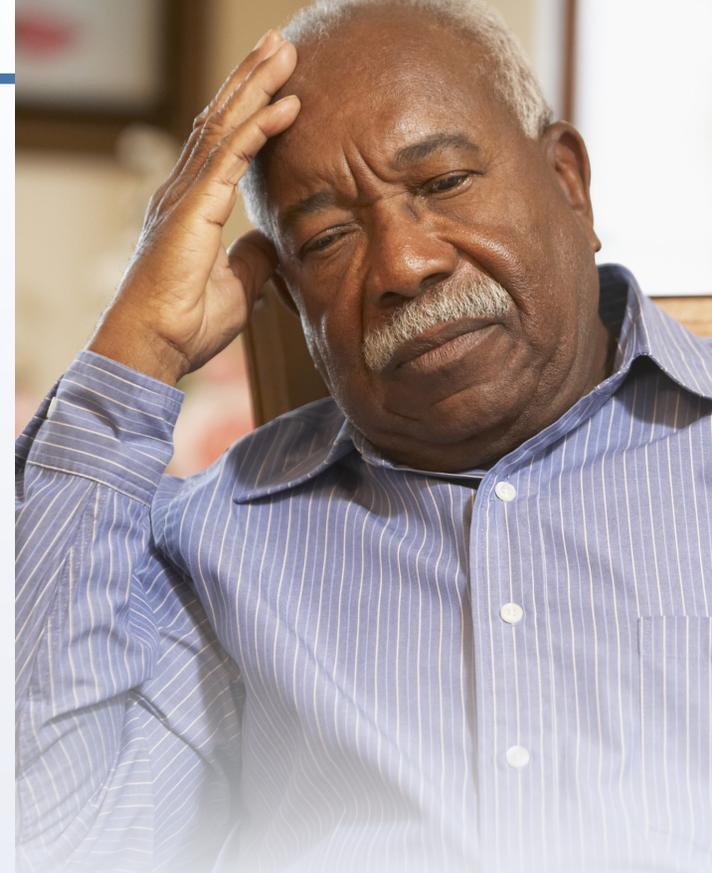
Abuse of a vulnerable adult refers to the sustaining of any physical pain or injury by a vulnerable adult as a result of cruel or inhumane treatment or as a result of a malicious act by a caregiver.

What is neglect?

Neglect of a vulnerable adult is defined as the intentional failure of a caregiver to provide necessary assistance and resources for the physical needs of the vulnerable adult. This includes food, clothing, toileting, essential medical treatment, shelter and supervision.

Who may be at risk of abuse?

Many adults rely on other people for assistance with their daily needs. They may be at risk from people they know -- a relative, friend, neighbor or paid caregiver -- or from a stranger. Abuse may occur in their own homes, long-term care facilities, adult day care centers, assisted living facilities, hospitals or group homes.



Who must report abuse and neglect?

Any person who believes that a vulnerable adult has been abused or neglected should report the alleged conduct to local law enforcement.

What can you do if you suspect abuse?

If you know of a worrisome situation, please do not ignore it. You can contact any of the agencies listed on the back of this brochure. You do not have to give your name, but the information provided may be acted upon.

