A Simple Contact Schedule for Checking on an Older Loved One

Why a Consistent Check-In Matters

When an older loved one lives independently, a regular check-in can catch small problems before they become big ones. And it does more than spot trouble; it reassures them that someone is paying attention. A planned schedule makes the habit easy to keep, even when life gets busy. This kind of routine also works well alongside a family monitored medical alarm, giving everyone a practical way to stay connected day to day.

Setting Up Your Schedule

Start by picking a time that fits both your day and theirs. Morning can be good for a quick hello and a sense of how they slept. Late afternoon works for a check before evening sets in. The key is consistency; choose a time and stick to it. Write it on a shared calendar or set a phone reminder so it becomes automatic. The goal is not surveillance; it is a natural moment of contact that feels like a habit, not an obligation.

A short list of what to ask about helps you cover the essentials without turning the call into an interrogation. Think of it as a friendly conversation with a few gentle prompts. Over time, this routine will show you what is normal for them, making it easier to notice when something is off. For extra peace of mind, you can also pair this routine with a service like familyr.co.nz, which provides a wearable medical alarm that family members can monitor remotely. That way, even on days when you cannot call at the usual time, you know the device is there if they need it.



What to Check on Each Call

Each conversation can cover a handful of simple points. You do not need to ask about every one every time; pick the ones that matter most today. Here is a practical list to guide you:

- **How they are feeling today.** A general mood or energy level can reveal a lot. If they seem tired or low, follow up gently. This is the most important check; it often opens the door to other topics they might not raise on their own.
- **Any health concerns since the last call.** Ask about new aches, pains, or changes in medication. Even small changes, like a new rash or a dizzy spell, can be early signs of something that needs attention. If they mention seeing a doctor, ask how it went.
- **Whether they have eaten and drunk enough today.** Older adults sometimes forget to eat or drink, especially if they live alone. Dehydration and poor nutrition can cause confusion, falls, and other health problems. A friendly reminder to have a glass of water or a proper meal can make a real difference.
- **If they have taken any recent falls or near falls.** Many older people downplay a stumble, but even a small fall can cause injury or fear of falling again. Ask directly but casually. If they mention a fall, ask if they pressed their SOS button or contacted their response network. This is also a good moment to remind them of the two way voice feature on their device, so they can talk to someone immediately if needed.

- **How their home feels and looks.** Ask about the temperature, any strange smells, or things that seem out of place. A too-cold house in winter or a cluttered floor in the hallway can be a safety risk. If something sounds off, you might want to arrange a quick visit or ask a neighbour to check.

These questions are a starting point, not a script. Adjust them to suit your loved one's personality and health. The important thing is to keep the conversation natural and to listen more than you talk.

When You Cannot Reach Them

Sometimes the call goes to voicemail or they do not pick up. Do not panic. Have a backup plan ready: a neighbour, another family member, or a keyholder who can physically check on them. If you have set up a family monitored medical alarm, you can also check the device's status to see if it has been used recently. If the alarm has fall detection or a GPS location, that can give you helpful clues. But always follow up with a human visit or call to make sure they are safe.

If you cannot reach anyone after a reasonable time and you are still worried, call 111 emergency services. It is better to act on a false alarm than to miss a real emergency. Make sure your loved one knows that this is your policy and that you will always check before calling for help, so they do not feel invaded.



Using Technology to Support Your Routine

A simple phone call is the backbone of this schedule, but technology can help fill the gaps. A family monitored medical alarm like familyr.co.nz lets you receive SMS alerts if the SOS button is pressed, or if the device detects a fall. That way, even when you are not calling, you know help is on the way if needed. The device also has two way voice, so you can talk directly to your loved one through the device if they activate it. This can be especially useful if they are confused or unable to reach the phone.

You can also set up a shared calendar or a simple group chat with other family members to coordinate who is checking in and when. That avoids everyone calling on the same day and no one calling the next. A shared contact list of neighbours, doctors, and keyholders is another

good idea. Keep it somewhere everyone can access, like a family group chat or a shared note on a phone.

Adapting the Schedule Over Time

As your loved one's health changes, the schedule should change too. If they start using a walker or have a new diagnosis, you may want to increase the frequency of calls or add a mid-day check. If they seem fine and independent, you can ease back to a few times a week. The goal is to provide the right level of support without being overbearing. Talk openly with them about what feels right. Many older adults appreciate knowing someone cares, as long as the check-in feels like a conversation, not a chore.


SOS

A consistent contact schedule is one of the simplest and most effective ways to support an older loved one's independence. It does not require any special equipment or training; just a bit of time and a willingness to listen. When you combine that routine with a family monitored medical alarm, you create a safety net that works both during and between your calls. That is the kind of support that helps everyone sleep a little easier.