

# Neglect

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## What is neglect of older people?

The neglect of older people is the failure to meet an older person's basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, warmth or essential medical care.

Neglect is defined as:

- A failure to provide medical attention or care
- Not providing adequate food or drink
- Poor personal hygiene, like unclean clothing
- Unmet physical needs, like withholding dentures or a walking frame
- Refusing to allow others to provide appropriate care
- Abandoning an older person with insufficient or no support

3% of older people reported experiencing this form of abuse in the last 12 months.<sup>1</sup>

Neglect is often gradual and can be intentional or unintentional. For example, it could be a nominated carer struggling to cope.

Important factors to consider when thinking about neglect include an older person's level of need, the frequency of the person's experience of not receiving help and the impact of the failure to receive help.

In the recent National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study more women reported experiencing neglect than men.<sup>2</sup>

The most common form of neglect involved a failure to do routine housework (79.8%).<sup>3</sup> Another common form of neglect reported was a failure to assist with transport (69%).<sup>4</sup>

Other notable forms of neglect related to issues around omissions in meal preparation (52%), personal care omissions (25.6%), assistance with taking the right medicine at the right times (25%), help getting in and out of bed (18%), assistance with eating, including cutting up food (16.9%) and support with toileting (16%).<sup>5</sup>

## References

1. [National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, 2021](#)
2. [National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, 2021](#)
3. [National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, 2021](#)
4. [National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, 2021](#)

## Read more about different types of abuse:

**Financial abuse** is theft or misuse of an older person's money, assets or property.



### Financial abuse

**Psychological abuse** is also commonly known as emotional abuse.

It is any act that causes emotional pain, anguish, or distress, or is demeaning to an individual.



### Psychological abuse

**Physical abuse** is an act that causes physical pain, injury or a combination of both.



### Physical abuse

**Sexual abuse** is any behaviour of a sexual nature, done to an older person without their consent.

This includes physical interactions and non-contact acts of a sexual nature.



### Sexual abuse