

# Dear Abby

## Worried Son Foresees Trouble in Parents' All-Day Drinking

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by Abigail Van Buren

DEAR ABBY: I have been concerned about my parents for some time now. They are elderly and live in a retirement community. They have a very nice home and don't have to worry about money.

The problem is, they drink every day -- sometimes from noon to when they go to bed. Many times, their drinking has caused arguments and police visits. When I express my concern about their drinking, they tell me to stay out of it, mind my own business, and they're retired and have earned the right to do whatever they want.

Abby, I don't mind them having cocktails every now and then, but this has gotten out of hand. I think they have become alcoholics and only bad things are coming of it. They refuse to listen to me, or anybody else, for that matter. What should I do? -- WORRIED WILLIAM IN NEW YORK

DEAR WILLIAM: As people age, their bodies are sometimes less able to metabolize alcohol than they were when they were younger. When things get out of hand to the extent that the police are being called, I agree something must be done. Because there is this level of disruption going on, it follows that the neighbors in that very nice retirement community must be less than thrilled.

That your parents drink is only part of the problem. Elderly people can suffer from balance problems even when they are sober. It is common for someone who is inebriated to fall, which could cause your mom or dad to suffer serious injury.

If other family members are also worried about your folks, an intervention might be in order. Before attempting one, attend some Al-Anon meetings so you can listen to others' similar experiences and learn how they were handled. Visit [www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org), or call 1-888-4-ALANON to find a meeting near you.