

## TYPES OF CARE FACILITIES

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## CHOOSING A CARE FACILITIES

The decision to move to a care facility is a difficult one, so keep your search as simple and organized as possible. Once you and your loved one have decided that he or she should no longer live at home, follow these steps to ensure a smooth transition to residential care.

- 1) Select the appropriate type of facility.
- 2) Locate suitable facilities and make contact.
- 3) Hold preliminary visits.
- 4) Narrow your selections and conduct interviews.
- 5) Scrutinize the contract.
- 6) Ask for licensing reports.
- 7) Contact the long-term care ombudsman.

### 1) Select the appropriate type of facility.

Different facilities offer different levels of care, so it's important to determine the type of facility that best suits your loved one. The list below provides information about the most common types of residential care. For more detailed information—including worksheets to help identify your loved one's needs—visit the National Caregivers Library Web site.

- l **Independent Living Facilities** usually include amenities such as entertainment, meals, and socialization. Some offer light housekeeping or transportation services, and a few have staff to administer medication and coordinate health care.
- l **Adult Residential Care** includes licensed boarding homes that provide room and board, help with medications, and personal care. Residents also receive limited supervision.
- l **Adult Family Homes** may accommodate couples and are licensed to care for up to six residents. They provide room, board, laundry, assistance with activities of daily living, personal care, and social services.
- l **Assisted Living Facilities** emphasize privacy, independence, and personal choice. Most of these facilities provide meals, personal care, medication assistance, limited supervision, organized activities, and/or limited nursing services.
- l **Continuing Care Retirement Communities** accept seniors while they are still independent, and then provide an expanding range of services—including professional nursing care—as needed.
- l **Nursing Homes** provide residents with rooms, meals, recreation, personal care, 24-hour nursing care, and protective supervision. Nursing homes vary, but services should be licensed and follow both state and federal regulations.

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### 2) Locate suitable facilities and make contact.

Once you've determined the best type of facility, find out what your options are. Gather information about care facilities in your loved one's area, and make a list of places you want to visit.

- | Get recommendations from friends and family members.
- | Doctors, social workers, and clergy members may also make referrals.
- | Ask your loved one if his or her friends who have experience with residential care can offer opinions.
- | The Resources at [www.CaregiversLibrary.org](http://www.CaregiversLibrary.org) can also help you find local care facilities.

After you compile your list, make an initial round of phone calls. You may be able to eliminate several facilities with just a short exploration.

Ask basic questions about vacancies, number of residents, costs and method of payment, and participation in Medicare and Medicaid. Also consider such services as transportation, meals, housekeeping, recreation, special Alzheimer's units, or medication policies.

### 3) Hold preliminary visits.

It's best if you and your loved one preview several care facilities together. Take the tours, listen to the administrative presentations, and consider the following:

- | Look for the facility's license. Ask to see it if you don't.
- | Take a close look at the building and grounds.
- | Talk with some residents.
- | Talk to the administrator or the person in charge of daily operations.
- | Talk to staff members.
- | Talk with other residents' family members.
- | Ask to see a copy of the admission agreement or contract.

### 4) Narrow your selections and conduct interviews.

Return to those facilities that seem capable of fulfilling your loved one's needs and talk with the residents. How do they feel about the facility? Talk with staff. Are they respectful? Knowledgeable? Compare your impressions of different facilities.

- | The checklists at the end of this section will help you evaluate nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Make multiple copies and keep a record of each visit.

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‡ If possible, make an unannounced visit to the facility.

### 5) Scrutinize the contract.

Obtain a copy of the contract so you and your loved one can review the document, get advice from outside sources, and compile a list of questions.

‡ Because the admissions contract is legally binding, it's wise to discuss it with a lawyer.

‡ Your loved one can change terms of the contract. Each change must be initialed by both your loved one and a facility representative.

‡ Be sure that the contract is correct before your loved one signs it.

A comprehensive contract should:

‡ State your loved one's rights and obligations, including the facility's grievance procedures.

‡ Specify how much money your loved one must pay each day or month.

‡ Detail prices for items not included in the basic monthly or daily charge.

‡ State the facility's policy on holding a bed if your loved one leaves temporarily for reasons such as hospitalization or vacation.

‡ State whether the facility is Medicaid and/or Medicare certified.

### 6) Ask for licensing reports.

Most facilities display their licenses and certificates. Ask to see these and take the time to examine them.

‡ Review the latest state survey or inspection.

‡ If the facility had deficiencies, make sure they've been fixed.

‡ If you're looking at an assisted living facility connected to a nursing home, ask to see the nursing home's inspection report and examine the administrative structure.

‡ Be wary of facilities that cannot produce these documents.



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### 7) Contact the long-term care ombudsman.

The ombudsman program examines the conditions of long-term care facilities on a regular basis, so local ombudsmen are a valuable source for information. While they cannot make recommendations, ombudsmen can provide information on complaints against each facility and indicators of good care.

- | Ombudsmen monitor complaints about quality of care, as well as problems that residents have regarding eligibility for state programs, financial status, legal difficulties, and transfer assistance.
  - | The ombudsman program can offer a breakdown of residents' rights and federal and state regulations.
- .....



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[www.CaregivingMinistries.org](http://www.CaregivingMinistries.org)

[www.CaregiversLibrary.org](http://www.CaregiversLibrary.org)

Browse our library containing over thousands of pages of articles on all aspects of family caregiving, and caregiving ministries within congregations and communities.



# NURSING HOME CHESTLIST

Make a copy of this checklist for each nursing home that you visit. Then, compare the lists. This will help you and your loved one select the best possible nursing home.

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**Facility Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Visited:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

I. Basic Information:	Yes	No
1) Medicare certified	0	0
2) Medicaid certified	0	0
3) Accepting new patients	0	0
4) Waiting period for admission	0	0
5) The home and the current administrator are licensed.	0	0
6) The home conducts background checks on all staff.	0	0
7) The home has Special Services Units.	0	0
8) The home has Abuse Prevention Training.	0	0
9) Number of beds in each category available to you:		

For parts two through five, give the nursing home a grade from one to five. One is poor, five is best

II. Quality of Care	Rating
1) Residents can make choices about their daily routine.	1 2 3 4 5
2) The interaction between staff and patient is warm and respectful.	1 2 3 4 5
3) The home is easy to visit for friends and family.	1 2 3 4 5
4) The nursing home meets your cultural, religious, or language needs.	1 2 3 4 5
5) The nursing home smells and looks clean and is well lighted.	1 2 3 4 5
6) The home maintains comfortable temperatures.	1 2 3 4 5
7) The resident rooms have personal articles and furniture.	1 2 3 4 5
8) The public and resident rooms have comfortable furniture.	1 2 3 4 5
9) The nursing home and its dining room are generally quiet.	1 2 3 4 5
10) Residents may choose from a variety of activities that they enjoy	1 2 3 4 5
11) The nursing home has outside volunteer groups.	1 2 3 4 5
12) The nursing home has outdoor areas for resident use.	1 2 3 4 5

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_



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### IV. Quality of Life

**Rating**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1) The facility corrected any Quality of Care deficiencies that were in the State Inspection Report.     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2) Residents may continue to see their personal physician.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3) Residents are clean, appropriately dressed, and well groomed.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4) The staff responds quickly to calls for help.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5) The administrator and staff seem comfortable with each other and with the residents.                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6) Residents have the same caregivers on a daily basis.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7) There are enough staff at night and on weekends or holidays to care for each resident.                | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8) The home has an arrangement for emergency situations with a nearby hospital.                          | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9) The family and residents councils are independent from the nursing home's management.                 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10) Care plan meetings are held at times that are easy for residents and their family members to attend. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

### V. Nutrition Information

**Rating**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1) The home corrected any deficiencies in these areas that were on the recent survey. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2) There are enough staff to assist each resident who requires help with eating.      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3) The food smells and looks good and is served at proper temperatures.               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4) Residents are offered choices of food at mealtimes.                                | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5) Resident weight is routinely monitored.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6) There are water pitchers and glasses on tables in the rooms.                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7) Staff helps residents to drink if they are not able to do so on their own.         | 1 2 3 4 5 |



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## NURSING HOME CHESTLIST

- 8) Nutritious snacks are available during the day and evening. 1 2 3 4 5
- 9) The dining room environment encourages residents to relax, socialize, and enjoy their food. 1 2 3 4 5

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

### VI. Safety

**Rating**

- 1) There are handrails in hallways and grab bars in bathrooms. 1 2 3 4 5
- 2) Exits are clearly marked. 1 2 3 4 5
- 3) Spills and other accidents are cleaned up quickly. 1 2 3 4 5
- 4) Hallways are free of clutter and well-lighted. 1 2 3 4 5
- 5) There are enough staff to help move residents quickly in an emergency. 1 2 3 4 5
- 6) The nursing home has smoke detectors and sprinklers. 1 2 3 4 5

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FACILITY TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## QUESTIONS FOR ASSISTED LIVING

Refer to these questions for each assisted living facility you and your loved one visit. This will help you select the best possible place.

Keep in mind that the term “assisted living” encompasses a wide range of care and services, and that each state applies the term differently. Remember, too, that every community is unique. Some of the items below may not apply to the facility you are considering, and your loved one may not even require such services.

### General Impressions

- | How often are activities in the community scheduled? What staff are included?
- | Can residents walk on the grounds? Are there protected/enclosed walking areas for residents with dementia?
- | How are religious/spiritual needs met? Is there transportation to church or synagogue? Is there room and arrangements for worship programs in the facility?
- | Who develops and supervises recreational activities? What is this person's background?
- | Do residents have input into activities offered?

### Meals

Sample a few meals. How does the food taste? If your loved one has special dietary needs, describe them and ask how those needs can be met. Ask to see a printed menu for the month. Does it look appealing?

- | What times are meals served?
- | What happens if a resident is late, misses a meal, or refuses a meal? Is the answer different if a resident is confused?
- | What if a resident wants to skip a meal regularly? Is the answer different if a resident is confused?
- | Can residents request to have a tray delivered to their room? Is there an additional charge?
- | If a resident doesn't like a meal, what are the alternatives?
- | Are snacks available at any time? What kind of snacks are available?
- | Does a nutritionist or dietitian review meals and special diets? If yes, how often?

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## QUESTIONS FOR ASSISTED LIVING

### Safety/Choice

Facilities vary with regard to the extent of protection they offer residents and may use negotiated risk agreements or contracts when issues of safety and choice arise. Because each facility may define the terms differently, use a different term, or not believe in using such agreements, Caregiving Ministries, the National Caregivers Library and the Consumer Cooperative on Assisted Living urge you to ask the facility whether it uses any form of negotiated risk agreements. If they do, they should clearly explain what they mean by the terms they use and how they use such agreements in practice at the facility.

- | What safety measures are in place to protect residents from wandering away? Personal property being stolen?
- | What if residents want an exception to a policy, e.g. signing in and out, smoking, or eating foods that are not on a prescribed diet? Is the answer different if a resident is confused?
- | Are background checks performed on all staff? What kind?
- | Which doors of the facility are locked and when? Are exit doors alarmed?
- | Are there safety locks on the windows?
- | Are there call bells in each room and bathroom? How often are they checked to be sure they are working correctly?
- | Is there a fire emergency plan? Are there fire drills? Are emergency plans publicly displayed?
- | Is the floor covering of the facility made of a nonskid material?

### Facility Initiated Discharge

Answers to these questions will help you clarify a facility's ability to care for people with health and behavior conditions that are more difficult to manage.

- | What are reasons for discharge?
- | Is there an internal appeal process? What is it?
- | How many days notice is given and to whom?
- | How does the facility assist you if they proceed with discharge?



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### Accessibility

- | Are hallways, doorways, bathrooms and common areas fully accessible to people in wheelchairs?
  
- | If it is a multi-floor facility, what are the safety arrangements or escape in case of fire for people in wheelchairs?

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