

NURSING HOME CHECKLIST

Location

If you are shopping for your loved one who will be there long term, is the location convenient enough to allow you to visit frequently? If not, does the quality of care make up for the extra distance you will drive?

Is the area of town the community is in safe and free of crime?

Is there a nearby hospital?

Physical Plant

Does the community seem clean and well maintained?

Is the community free from odors? (Occasional, isolated odors are to be expected but pervasive odors are not.)

Is the temperature warm in the winter or cool in the summer? Ask if rooms are air conditioned (not just hallways but each individual room).

Are exterior doors kept locked during the daytime hours? In the evenings?

Pay attention to the noise level in the building. Is there a lot of overhead paging?

Does the staff shout from one end of the hallway to another?

Are the rooms large enough for two people if it is a semiprivate room?

How many people will share a bathroom?

Where is the shower? If it is a shower room, is it clean and odor free?

Are there clean, filled water pictures on resident bedside tables?

Is there a phone and/or a television? If not, can residents bring them in?

Are there smoke detectors and sprinklers?

Are there common areas for residents to gather in?

Is there a window in each resident room?

Are there handrails in all hallways and grab bars in all bathrooms?

Is there a wander guard or other alert system in place to help prevent residents from eloping?

Is there good lighting throughout the community both indoors and in parking areas outdoors?

Personal Care & Assistance

Ask what the community's evacuation plan is. How do they safely evacuate bedbound residents or those that need additional assistance?

Ask how medical emergencies are handled and how family is notified?

Ask how often care plan meetings are held and if they can be held at times convenient for you to attend.

Ask who the community medical director is.

Ask if the community is certified in both Medicare and Medicaid.

Are therapy services available if your loved one needs them?

Is there a separate program for residents with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias?

Are call lights promptly answered by staff?

Ask to see the results of their last state survey (or ask your SeniorLiving.Net Senior Care Advisor to help you with these ratings).

Ask when their last complaint survey (when state surveyors are called in due to a resident or family complaint) was and if the complaint was substantiated or not. If it was, ask what the plan of correction was.

Ask about the therapy services and the credentials of the therapy team.

How many RNs are there on staff? How many LPNs?

Is an RN onsite 24/7?

Ask about the hiring process. Is staff given background checks? After their initial orientation, what kind of yearly training is required?

Program Services

Are resident activities going on in the campus during your tour? Or are residents asleep in wheelchairs around the nurses' station or television?

Ask to see where the resident activity calendar is posted. Are there activities to meet your loved ones capabilities?

Are religious services offered at the community?

Are there opportunities for residents to go out in to the community to restaurants, movies and more?

Are activities planned for evenings and weekends?

Is there an outdoor area for residents?

Does the community have a volunteer program and how many volunteers do they have?

How many people are on the program services staff? What are their credentials and training?

Dining Services

Do residents have menu choices for each meal?

Are healthy snacks and beverages available upon request?

How many extra staff members help with meal service?

Is there one seating for dinner or two? Are those residents who need extra help with meals seated at a different time or in a different location?

Is there a dietician on staff or as a consultant?

What times are meals served?

Will someone bring a tray down to a patient room if they are under the weather?

Talk With Current Residents and Families

Observe the interactions between staff, residents and families on your tour. Do the relationships seem positive?

Do residents seem clean and well-groomed?

Are residents dressed appropriately for the time of day and the temperature?

Ask residents what they like and dislike about the community.

Introduce yourself to family members you see arriving and departing as you tour.

Ask them how long their loved one has lived there? What do they like and dislike about the community?

Are staff members greeting residents by name?

Do staff members make eye contact with you as you tour? Do they greet you warmly?