

Finding the Best Care Center

Comparing Care Centers and Making the Best Decision

Placing a loved one in a care center is one of the most difficult tasks a family member ever faces. But when it becomes necessary, prospective residents and their families should have the best information possible to make this decision.

Decision Process:

First, speak with people you can trust and who may be able to provide valuable information about a particular facility, as well as the needs of the potential resident.

Family • Friends • Health Professionals

Second, begin gathering basic information about the senior care centers you are considering. Keep in mind that location is important. Choosing a center located close to family and friends will allow more time for visiting.

Next, visiting the care center is one of the most important steps in the selection process, as it will allow you to comparison shop using the checklist we have provided. This will actually allow you to talk with the staff and the residents who receive care and live at the center and keep a record of their answers. As you conduct your interviews, be sure to respect resident privacy. You may visit a center during a scheduled tour, or you may also visit the center unannounced.

Finally, let your senses guide you through your tour – sight, smell, touch, sound and taste – are important factors. Use this checklist as a guide to note specific things about each center you visit. Then you will have the information that will help you make an informed and best decision for your loved one, and you.



You want to find the best care center for your loved one. The comparison checklist will assist you in comparing care centers and making the best decision.




Care Center Comparison Checklist



Care and Rehabilitation Centered Around You.

General

			
Is the center close to family and friends for visitation?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What is the occupancy rate?			
Is the center certified by Medicare and Medicaid?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are visiting hours convenient for residents and visitors?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the center near a hospital that serves center residents?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What is the deficiency rating of the center?			


Care

Is care used in selecting roommates?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are physical, occupational and speech therapies available?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What is the staff-to-resident ratio?			
Are care plan meetings held at times that are convenient for residents and family members to attend?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are families invited to participate in the plan of care?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are residents well-groomed?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the center provide the special service you may need? (dementia, behavior, ventilator, wound care, etc.)	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Resident Room

How many residents share a bathroom?			
Can residents bring personal belongings from home?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the rooms clean?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the rooms furnished?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does each resident have storage space in his or her room?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Can call lights be reached by each resident?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Environment

			
Is the center odor-free?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the center appear clean and well-kept?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are exits clearly marked?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are noise levels in the dining room and other common areas comfortable?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there quiet areas where residents can visit with family and friends?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Menus and Food

Do residents have a choice of food items at each meal?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are nutritious snacks available?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is resident assistance available during mealtimes if needed?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does a dietitian plan menus for residents on special diets?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Can residents eat in their rooms if they so choose?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Activities

Are rooms available for resident activities?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a variety of activities available for residents?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are outdoor areas available for residents' use?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Staff

Does the relationship between the staff and the residents appear to be warm, polite and respectful?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the staff knock on the door before entering a resident room and refer to them by name?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a care provider available to coordinate personal needs? (errands, physician appointments, etc.)	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Costs

What is the rate?			
What services does it cover?			