



Aging & Disability Resource Center
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What is an Assisted Living Facility?

An Assisted Living Facility provides care for seniors and/or for those with disabilities who need some help with activities of daily living yet wish to remain as independent as possible. A middle ground between independent living and nursing homes, Assisted Living Facilities aim to foster as much autonomy as the resident is capable of. Most facilities offer 24-hour supervision and an array of support services, with more privacy, space, and dignity than many nursing homes—at a lower cost.

How to choose an Assisted Living Facility

Choosing an Assisted Living Facility is a challenging responsibility. Whether you are looking for a family member or friend, take note that the assisted living community should be able to meet the physical and safety needs of the resident. The first step in determining a well-suited assisted living facility is to identify several facilities that are conveniently located in the area of your choice. Visit each facility and talk with the manager and staff about services, policies, history and amenities.

What to look for in an Assisted Living Facility

First Impression

- Do you like the assisted living facility's location and outward appearance?
- Is the facility well-located for regular visits by family and friends?
- Are you welcomed with a kind greeting from the staff?
- Does the staff address residents by their names and interact with them?
- Can you talk to the residents about how they like living there?
- Are visits with the residents encouraged and welcomed at any time?
- Is there a waiting list?

Living Area and Accommodations

- Is the environment comforting? Are there activity programs?
- Is the floor plan well designed and easy to follow? Are the doorways, hallways and rooms convenient for wheelchairs and/or walkers?
- What is the facility's means of security if a resident wanders?
- May they decorate their own rooms? Is there adequate storage space?
- Are the bathrooms private or shared with handicapped accommodations?
- Does the room have a telephone and cable TV and how is the billing handled?
- May the residents smoke in their room or is there a designated area?

Moving In, Contracts and Finances

- Is the facility licensed? Is the license displayed? How long has the facility been in business?
- What are the conditions for moving in/out? Is there a security deposit? What is the refund policy?
- Is there a written plan of care for each resident and is there an ongoing assessment of a resident's needs for services?
- As the resident's needs change, how is the decision made whether or not he or she will be able to remain at the facility?
- Are resident's rooms furnished or unfurnished? Will your room be held for the resident should they require hospitalization or nursing home care while the resident is away?
- Is there a written statement of resident's rights and responsibilities?
- What are the specific costs for various levels of care? What forms of payment does the facility accept? Do you receive a discount for unused services?
- If a contract is terminated, what are the policies for refunds and is there an appeal process for dissatisfied residents?
- Are residents required to purchase renter's insurance for personal property?
- Does the assisted living facility have an emergency plan in case of a natural disaster or power outage? In case of an emergency, you need to know that the assisted living facility can provide care for the resident.

Health and Personal Care Services

Social and Recreation

- Is the staff available to provide assistance with activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility, hygiene and grooming?
- How often does a staff member check on a resident's whereabouts and well-being?
- Does the staff supervise or assist a resident in taking medication? What safeguards are in place to ensure that residents get the appropriate medications on time and in the correct dosage? Are there limitations on how staff will handle medications?
- Does the staff assist in making arrangements to have nursing services come in or for the resident to go see a physician?
- Does the resident or the facility provide transportation to appointments?
- Does the facility provide three meals a day? What about special diets?
- Does the facility provide bed linens and towels? Is housekeeping and personal laundry included in the fees?
- What kind of recreational activities are offered?
- Does the facility schedule trips to go to events off the premises?
- Are there supplies for social activities and hobbies?
- Are residents allowed pets in the facility? Does the facility have pets?