

SHARE THE WELLNESS TIP



February 6, 2015

Caregiver's Guide To Choosing a Nursing Home



Deciding to move a family member into a nursing home can be one of life's most difficult and stressful decisions. However, a little homework can go a long way in helping you find the best care for your loved one and giving you peace of mind.

Is a Nursing Home the Best Option?

A nursing home provides care for people who can't care for themselves or be cared for at home, but who don't require hospitalization. Many people begin looking at assisted living if the person is not in need of as much care.

Keep this important thought in mind: when shopping for an independent living, assisted living or continuing-care retirement community, consider on a nursing home that is either affiliated with or part of the community. Imagine your loved one living there. Will it work for the family? By staying in the same community, your loved one will be spared moving to a completely new setting every time their condition changes.

When Is It Time to Choose a Nursing Home?

Ultimately, your loved one's health conditions determine whether a nursing home is appropriate.

Your family member's doctor can help you make this decision. You may consider a nursing home if your loved one:

- ♥ Has a disability
- ♥ Is unable to perform routine daily activities, such as bathing, using the bathroom, dressing or walking
- ♥ Suffers from dementia
- ♥ Finds it difficult to make daily decisions
- ♥ Has bladder or bowel incontinence

Ask the Right Questions

If you decide to move your loved one into a nursing home, ask your doctor, family, friends or clergy if they can recommend facilities. Visit several, and ask the employees questions such as:

- ♥ How much do basic services cost and what services are covered? Will additional costs be required to meet my loved one's needs?
- ♥ Are there doctors on staff? Can residents still see their own doctors?
- ♥ How many nurses are on duty?
- ♥ Is the facility accredited by a nationally recognized organization, such as The Joint Commission? Is it certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services?
- ♥ What are the staff's qualifications and credentials?
- ♥ What security, emergency and safety measures are in place?
- ♥ Can residents participate in a wide range of social, religious or recreational activities?
- ♥ Are the residents' food preferences and needs honored?

After you've narrowed down your list, consider visiting the facilities again without calling ahead. Be on the lookout for possible signs of abuse or neglect, such as bruises, soiled clothing and unpleasant smells. Try a different day or time so you can meet other employees and observe different activities.