

## NURSING HOMES

---

All areas in the facility should be easy to navigate and get around in, as well as:

- Appear clean and orderly with an easy-to-understand and remember layout;
  - Have doorways and walkways that easily accommodate walkers and wheelchairs with elevators as an alternative to stairs;
  - Smell pleasant, without strong and unpleasant odors (urine, feces, or sanitizer/deodorizer);
  - Have rooms with features you desire, such as comfortable chairs and beds, windows, bathroom handrails, television, etc.; and/or
  - Have clean and well-maintained common rooms and outdoor areas.
- 

Ask about services you want, including:

- The ability to manage a schedule (when to wake up, eat, and go to bed);
  - Interesting social or other activities;
  - A volunteer program or other persons that assure adequate social stimulation to all residents;
  - Transportation as needed for medical visits;
  - Housekeeping and laundry services.
  - Hairdresser, barber, or other personal grooming services; and/or
  - Religious services.
- 

Important medical care considerations include:

- Handling of medications, medical emergencies, non-emergency medical situations (e.g. falls or infectious illness), and problems like wandering, disorientation, and agitation;
  - How visits from physical therapists, occupational therapists, medical specialists, and physicians are scheduled and maintained;
  - The degree of medical care provided by the facility, including nursing coverage, the number of nurses' stations and aides; and/or
  - Trained staff or special programming for residents with [dementia](#) or Alzheimer's.
- 

Important staff qualities include being:

- Warm and welcoming to residents and families;
  - Kind, patient, and respectful with residents, including referring to them by their names;
  - Helpful and attentive, but not overworked; and/or
  - Able to communicate clearly with residents, families, and other caregivers, without language or communication barriers.
- 

Other important considerations for staff members include if:

- They wear name tags;
  - They knock before entering a resident's room;
  - There is adequate personnel during weekdays, weekends and holidays, evenings, and overnight;
  - They have consistent caregivers on a daily basis, as possible; and/or
  - They've been vetted via background checks to ensure they haven't been found guilty of abuse or neglect.
- 

You should be comfortable with the residents and the facility culture by determining if:

- The current residents seem happy and comfortable;
  - The residents socialize with each other;
  - You are able to talk with residents about their experience at the facility;
  - You think that you and your roommate will get along when you are considering sharing a room; and/or
  - There are other options if you don't.
- 

In order to be sure meals are enjoyable you should:

- Be sure the menu appeals to you and the kitchen can accommodate religious or medical dietary needs;
- Observe or participate in a meal at the facility; and/or
- Ask about the option of eating in your room rather than in the dining room or a packaged meal, bringing non-resident guests to dinner, holiday dining schedules, and if alcohol is served or available at meals.