

Courtesy of:  
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**ELDERCARE**



Choosing a nursing home for a family member can be one of the most difficult decisions you make. Once you have created a list of homes to consider, you may want to make several copies of the following checklist and fill in one for each nursing home you visit.

This material should be used as helpful hints only. Each person's situation is different. You should consult your investment professional or other relevant professional before making any decisions.

## NURSING HOME CHECKLIST

Nursing home: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### Credentials and overall environment

Is the facility certified by Medicare and Medicaid?  Yes  No

How long has the facility been certified? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the facility had stable ownership for some time, with the same administrator and director?  Yes  No

Is a statement of residents' rights clearly posted?  Yes  No

Does the facility have an Alzheimer's unit or other special-care area restricted to residents with special-care needs?  Yes  No

Is this specialty unit separated from other areas of the facility?  Yes  No

Is the facility well lit, clean, safe and welcoming?  Yes  No

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**Location and visiting**

Frequent visits generally will improve the resident's mental and emotional well-being and ensure that quality-of-care issues can be addressed as they arise.

Is the facility convenient to the resident's family members and friends?  Yes  No

What are the visiting hours?

Are family visits welcomed?  Yes  No

Are there restrictions on visits by children?  Yes  No

Are family members allowed to take residents out for a day or overnight?  Yes  No

Are there areas where family and friends can visit privately?  Yes  No

Is the facility close to the office of the resident's doctor?  Yes  No

Is the facility convenient to public transportation?  Yes  No

**Mental and emotional well-being**

Are mental health services available?  Yes  No

Are activities planned each day for the residents?  Yes  No

Are events regularly scheduled? (Ask to look at the schedule.)  Yes  No

Are there activities for residents who cannot leave their beds?  Yes  No

Is there a library available for residents, with large-print and audio books?  Yes  No

Is there a small store for purchasing personal items, such as shaving cream, hair care products and snacks?  Yes  No

Are residents able to enjoy outdoor areas, such as an enclosed garden?  Yes  No

Are plants, pets and other natural elements added to the residents' environment?  Yes  No

Are residents taken to special community events and cultural activities?  Yes  No

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**Rooms**

Will the resident share a room and/or a bathroom with one or more other resident(s)?  Yes  No

How are roommates and rooms selected?

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If the resident is dissatisfied, can roommates be changed?  Yes  No

How is this accomplished?

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Can the resident bring some of his or her own furniture and decorations?  Yes  No

Is there enough room to get around between the beds? (Keep in mind whether wheelchairs must be maneuvered.)  Yes  No

Are nurse and emergency call buttons within easy reach of bed, toilet and bath?  Yes  No

**Care plan**

Individual care plans must be implemented for each resident.

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How often is the care plan reviewed and changed?

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What is the protocol for handling problems?

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Are there regular fire drills?  Yes  No

What bathing facilities are available, and how is bathing handled when the person needs assistance?

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**Nursing home employees**

How are employees selected?

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Are employees screened for drug use, criminal records or other potential problems?  Yes  No

What is the turnover rate for skilled employees?

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**Nursing home employees** (continued)

What is the turnover rate for employees who perform ancillary services, such as meal preparation and financial recordkeeping?

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Are registered nurses or licensed practical nurses on duty at all times?  Yes  No

Is a social worker on staff?  Yes  No

What is the ratio of staff to residents during each shift?  
(Ideally, a facility will have one nurse's aide for every five or six residents between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m.)

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Does the staff treat residents with respect?  Yes  No

Can you talk privately to residents to ask what they think of the facility?  Yes  No

Are staff members available to talk if you have a question about a loved one's care?  Yes  No

**Medical care**

Is there a physician used by the majority of residents?  Yes  No

What are his or her qualifications?

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How often is the doctor on the premises?

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Does the doctor have a good bedside manner with residents?  Yes  No

May residents consult their personal physicians if they choose?  Yes  No

Are there arrangements with a nearby hospital in the event of a medical emergency?  Yes  No

What diagnostic treatment facilities are available at the facility?

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**Meals**

Are meals served in a communal dining room or brought to each resident's room?

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If meals are served in a communal dining room, how are tables assigned?

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How long does it take for a meal to be delivered to a bedridden resident?

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How does the food taste, and how is it presented to the resident?

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Can you stay for a meal? (This will help you gauge the quality of the food service.)  Yes  No

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Ask for a sample menu.

Are there special meals for the holidays?  Yes  No

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**Admission requirements**

What financial information will the facility require during the admissions process?

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Can the resident or his or her representative have copies of all admissions documents and contracts for review in advance?  Yes  No

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How long does the admissions process take?

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**Cost of care**

What is included in the cost of care?

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How are extra items billed?

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Can laundry be taken off premises?  Yes  No

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Does this save the resident some costs?  Yes  No

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How are prescription drugs handled?

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What is the cost difference between a private and a semiprivate room?

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## ELDERCARE

### Transportation services

If required nonemergency medical services (such as dialysis) are not available on the premises, how is transportation arranged?

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What about transportation to other places, such as local stores and religious services?

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### Resources

On the Internet or by phone

#### AARP

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277)

#### Eldercare Locator

[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)

1-800-677-1116

#### Family Caregiver Alliance

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

1-800-445-8106

#### National Caregiving Foundation

[www.caregivingfoundation.org](http://www.caregivingfoundation.org)

1-800-930-1357

#### Leading Age

[www.leadingage.org](http://www.leadingage.org)

1-202-783-2242

### Contact your financial advisor for more information or visit [mfs.com](http://mfs.com).

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