

7 Most Important Things to Consider When Choosing a Nursing Home



Transitioning a loved one to a nursing home is often one of the most difficult and stressful decisions a family will face.

There are so many factors to consider to make sure the person you love is in the hands of caring healthcare professionals who are committed to providing compassionate, person-centered care. To make the right choice, you need to carefully research each

option, visit each nursing home you are considering and ask tough questions. We created this guide to help make this journey a bit less stressful. Here are the seven most important things you should consider when it is time to choose a nursing home.



1 Quality of Care

One of the most important things to consider is the quality of care provided by the nursing home. This includes the qualifications and experience of the staff, as well as the overall reputation of the facility.

- Schedule an appointment with the Executive Director of the nursing home and ask them to introduce you to all the Directors or Managers who oversee each department: clinical, social events, food service, medicine dispensing and transportation. It is especially important to meet the Director of Nursing to address the specific clinical needs of your loved one. Talk to residents and their family members to get their perspective and insights. Pay attention to the details: professionalism, courtesy, and cleanliness are important, but take time to also notice if residents are addressed by name, and if attention and awareness of all residents is demonstrably consistent.

- In addition to visiting the community, there are ample resources available to you online that provide valuable information. Families should also investigate any inspection reports or ratings from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to get an idea of the quality of care provided. [Medicare](#) uses a five-star rating system, allowing you to locate and compare facilities with a zip code. Additionally, non-profit organizations such as [NursingHome411](#) and [Nursing Home Inspect](#) give deeper insight into staffing or citations. Consider whether the long-term care community has earned accreditation through The Joint Commission which evaluates nursing homes on the quality and safety of care they provide.



2 Location and Accessibility

Even the most robust social and events calendar at a nursing home cannot take the place of a visit from friends and family. It is the highlight of any given day and oftentimes the single thing our loved ones look forward to the most. Being close to your loved one living in a nursing

home can make all the difference. It is important to consider how close everyone lives, not merely for the ever-important time together, but to get to medical appointments and other necessary services, or in the event of something more serious or critical.



3 Your Loved One's Needs and Desires

When it is feasible, include your loved one in the decision-making process of transitioning to a nursing home. First, to assure them that they will be receiving the care that they personally require, but also to demonstrate that you value their input and want to make sure that they have all their needs met. This allows your loved one a sense of independence and control during a fragile, and sometimes fearful, period of their life. Moving into a new home is a major transition for anyone, much less a senior who has years, if not an entire lifetime, of memories in their current home. In addition to meeting all necessary medical criteria, the community should also provide the social, religious, and desired activities best suited to your loved one's personality and preferences.

4 Amenities and Activities

The amenities and activities offered by the nursing home are also important to consider. Families should explore the types of activities and programs that are offered to residents, as well as the overall atmosphere of the facility. Consider whether the nursing home has special amenities such as a garden or a swimming pool, or live music and pet therapy. If church is important, ask if they have chapel services onsite. Having access to these activities will help your loved one stay happy, active, and engaged.

5 Safety and Security

Safety and security are also important factors to consider when selecting a nursing home. Families should understand the community's safety and security measures, including fire safety and emergency preparedness. They should also consider the overall safety and security of the surrounding area.

6 Staff-to-Resident Ratio and Specialized Care

The staff-to-resident ratio is another important consideration. Families should know how many staff members are available to care for the residents, as well as the qualifications and experience of those staff members. If your loved one has a specific condition such as dementia, you will want to choose a nursing home that specializes

in providing care for that condition. It's also important to check to see if the community utilizes telehealth to make visiting with their physician more convenient and if they use other digital technology such as ZOOM teleconferencing to help residents stay connected to their families.

7 Cost

When selecting a nursing home, you will want to have a thorough understanding of the fee structure. In addition to the cost of care, ask about any additional fees, such as room and board, therapy, and medication management. Your loved one's health insurance may cover some or all their care. Knowing all the costs upfront will help to ensure your family member is able to afford the care they need.



Your due diligence will bolster the confidence of your senior loved one to ensure a smooth transition; while simultaneously giving you peace of mind that they will be treated with the compassion, empathy, and respect they deserve.

At American Health Communities (AHC), we have been delivering quality, person-centered care in a home-like environment for more than 40 years.

We know these are difficult decisions, but
It's Okay, We've Got This.

We have the experience and expertise to assist you in finding the best place for your loved one. Please visit our website at: [AHCseniorcare.com](https://www.AHCseniorcare.com) to see a full location listing of our 29 Nursing Homes across Middle and West Tennessee and Northern Alabama. If you have questions, please call the AHC Community near you or email us at: Answers@AHCSeniorcare.com.
We're here for you.