

# Choosing an Assisted Living

Choosing the right assisted living facility should be an involved and carefully thought-out process just like choosing a house or an apartment.

Visit the facilities you are considering, talk to the staff and residents, and read through any brochures and information offered. Make several visits at varying times of the day and week in order to get a complete impression of the facility. When you tour the facilities, pay special attention to the attitudes and overall friendliness of the staff and residents because they are potential house mates. Find out which state and federal regulations apply, and make sure the facility properly complies with them. Most importantly, involve loved ones in making your decision.

The following are ideas to consider when choosing a facility:

## ***Living Area & Accommodations:***

- Is the community well-designed for residents' needs? Does it include safety features?
- What types of accommodations are available and how much does each cost?
- Does the staff greet you warmly? Do they call residents by name?
- Do residents socialize with each other and appear happy?
- Talk with some of the residents. Do they seem like people whom you'd enjoy getting to know?

## ***Personal Care & Services:***

- What professionals are on staff?
- What are their qualifications and availability?
- Are the supportive care services offered what you want and need?
- Is the food nutritious, appetizing, and prepared according to dietary restrictions?
- What social, recreational and physical fitness programs are available?

## ***Licensing & Costs:***

- Does the facility meet local and state licensing requirements?
- What are the costs, including any additional fees for extra services?
- Do residents receive a written service plan that is periodically reviewed and adjusted?
- Is the facility licensed by the state?
- Is the facility's administrator licensed by the state?

## ***Services & Activities:***

- Is socialization encouraged and promoted? Is it easy to socialize with other residents? Do lounge areas and a common dining room exist?
- What is the extent, range, and frequency of planned activities?

- Are there a lot of opportunities for transportation?
- How flexible is the transportation?
- Do opportunities for involvement with the surrounding community exist?
- How flexible is a resident's daily schedule? How much independence is allowed?
- Is a deposit required? Is it refundable?
- What services are included in the monthly cost? What services have to be paid for separately?
- What other services are available?
- Are utilities included in the cost?
- What circumstances might force a resident to leave the facility?

***Equipment/Amenities:***

- What types of amenities are available to residents?
- Is the facility equipped to support any special needs of the patient?
- Is extra storage space available?
- Is the facility located close to shopping centers and/or entertainment?
- Do the units have a telephone and television? How is billing handled?
- Is there a kitchen with a sink and refrigerator in the unit?
- Are religious facilities available?
- What kinds of opportunities are available for a resident to receive further care as a condition or problem requires?
- Is the facility connected with a nursing home or other kind of facility?
- What types of housing are available? (private/shared, apartment, suite)
- Is the housing furnished? If so, what is included?
- What types and what amount of personal belongings is a resident allowed to bring?
- What happens if you are unable to pay for services?

***Financial Considerations:***

- What is the monthly cost of the facility?
- What are the trends in rate increases over the past years?
- When can care services be terminated, and what is the refund policy?
- What are the payment, billing, and credit policies?