

Nursing Home Checklist

A list of basic questions to ask when you and your loved one visit a nursing home.

Print a new checklist for each nursing home that you visit. Then, compare the lists. This will help you and your loved one select the best possible nursing home.

Facility Name: _____ Date Visited: _____
Address: _____

I. Basic Information

1. Medicare Certified
2. Medicaid Certified
3. Accepting New Patients
4. Waiting Period for Admission
5. Number of Beds in each category available to you

YES

NO

USEFUL TIPS

- Generally, skilled nursing care is available only for a short period of time after a hospitalization. Basic nursing care is for a much longer period of time. If a facility offers both types of care, learn if residents may transfer between levels of care within the nursing home without having to move from their old room or from the nursing home.
- Nursing homes that only take Medicaid residents might offer longer term but less intensive levels of care. Homes that do not accept Medicaid payment may make a resident move when Medicare or the resident's own money runs out.
- An occupancy rate is the total number of residents currently living in a nursing home divided by the home's total number of beds. Occupancy rates vary by area, depending on the overall number of available nursing home beds.

II. Nursing Home Information

1. The home and the current administrator are licensed.
2. The home conducts background checks on all staff.
3. The home has Special Services Units.
4. The home has Abuse Prevention Training.

YES

NO

USEFUL TIPS

- LICENSURE: The nursing home and its administrator should be licensed by the State to operate.
- BACKGROUND CHECKS: Do the nursing home's procedures to screen potential employees for a history of abuse meet your State's requirements? Your State's Ombudsman program might be able to help you with this information.
- SPECIAL SERVICES: If a nursing home has special service units, learn if there are separate waiting periods or facility guidelines for when residents would be moved on or off the special unit. Some examples are: rehabilitation, Alzheimers, and hospice.
- STAFF TRAINING: Do the nursing home's training programs educate employees about how to recognize resident abuse and neglect, how to deal with aggressive or difficult residents, and how to deal with the stress of caring for so many needs? Are there clear procedures to identify events

or trends that might lead to abuse and neglect, and on how to investigate, report, and resolve your complaints?

- **LOSS PREVENTION:** Are there policies or procedures to safeguard resident pos-sessions?

For Parts three through six, give the nursing home a grade from one to five. One is poor, five is best.

III. Quality of Life	GRADE				
	POOR				BEST
1. Residents can make choices about their daily routine. Examples are when to go to bed or get up, when to bathe, or when to eat	1	2	3	4	5
2. The interaction between staff and patient is warm and respectful.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The home is easy to visit for friends and family.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The nursing home meets you cultural, religious, or language needs.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The nursing home smells and looks clean and is well-lighted.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The home maintains comfortable temperatures.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The resident rooms have personal articles and furniture.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The public and resident rooms have comfortable furniture.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The nursing home and its dining room are generally quiet.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Residents may choose from a variety of activities that they like.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The nursing home has outside volunteer groups.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The nursing home has outdoor areas for resident use and help residents to get outside.	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

IV. Quality of Care	GRADE				
	POOR				BEST
1. The facility corrected any Quality of Care deficiencies that were in the State Inspection Report.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Residents may continue to see their personal physician.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Residents are clean, appropriately dressed, and well-groomed.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Nursing home staff respond quickly to calls for help.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The administrator and staff seem comfortable with each other and with the residents.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Residents have the same caregivers on a daily basis.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There are enough staff at night and on weekends or holidays to care for each resident.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The home has an arrangement for emergency situations with a nearby hospital.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The family and residents councils are independent from the nursing home's management.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Care plan meetings are held at times that are easy for residents and their family members to attend.	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

USEFUL TIPS

- A good patient/staff ratio is important to good care, but you should also consider other care factors. Examples are staff training programs and how long staff stay at the home. If staff changes frequently, ask why.

- Good care plans are essential to good care. They should be put together by a team of providers and family and updated as often as necessary.

V. Nutrition Information	GRADE				
	POOR				BEST
1. The home corrected any deficiencies in these areas that were on the recent survey.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There are enough staff to assist each resident who requires help with eating.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The food smells and looks good and is served at proper temperatures.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Residents are offered choices of food at mealtimes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Residents' weight is routinely monitored.	1	2	3	4	5
6. There are water pitchers and glasses on table in the rooms.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Staff encourage residents to drink if they are not able to do so on their own.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Nutritious snacks are available during the day and evening.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The dining room environment encourages residents to relax, socialize, and enjoy their food.	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

USEFUL TIPS

- Ask the professional staff how the medicine a resident takes can effect what they eat and how often they may want something to drink.
- Visit at meal time. Are residents rushed through meals or do they have time to finish eating and to use the meal as an opportunity to socialize with each other?
- Sometimes the food a home serves is fine, but a resident still will not eat. Like everyone, nursing home residents like some control over their diet. Can they select their meals from a menu or select their mealtime?
- If residents need help eating, do care plans specify what type of assistance they will receive?

VI. Safety	GRADE				
	POOR				BEST
1. There are handrails in the hallways and grab bars in the bathrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Exits are clearly marked.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Spills and other accidents are cleaned up quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Hallways are free of clutter and well-lighted.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There are enough staff to help move residents quickly in an emergency.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The nursing home has smoke detectors and sprinklers.	1	2	3	4	5

TOTAL

FACILITY TOTAL	
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OTHER OBSERVATIONS:

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Adapted from *Your Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home*, United States Department of Health and Human Services Health Care Financing Administration.