

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN YOU TOUR

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It is time to start touring

The best advice is to locate and visit assisted living communities before a crisis. Meeting the staff, residents and often family members is one of the best ways to learn about the community. Every assisted living community is unique, but there are common questions to ask yourself and the community before, during, and after a visit. The checklist that follows will help you ask these questions and make an assessment for yourself and/or a loved one.

It is never too early to visit the options in our area. We have many wonderful communities and you will be sure to find one that you like.

Senior living communities:

- 1. Enable choice**
- 2. Preserve dignity**
- 3. Encourage Independence**
- 4. Promote quality of life**



Key Points

- Tour early, be proactive and get educated
- Visit at least 3 communities
- Ask questions

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Tip:

It is best to schedule an appointment to tour a community. When you set an appointment you will then meet with the appropriate person who will take the time to answer all of your questions and give you their undivided attention. Plan on your visit to be about an hour long.

Questions to ask and things to look for when you visit

Environment:

- ◇ As you arrive at the community, do you like its location and outward appearance?
- ◇ As you enter the lobby and tour the community, is the décor attractive and homelike?
- ◇ Do you receive a warm greeting from staff welcoming you to the community?
- ◇ Do residents socialize with each other and appear happy and comfortable?
- ◇ Does the executive director call residents by name and interact warmly with them as you tour the community?
- ◇ Are you able to talk with residents about how they like the community and staff?
- ◇ Do the staff members treat each other in a professional manner?
- ◇ Are the staff members that you pass during your tour friendly to you?
- ◇ Are visits with the resident welcome at any time?

Physical Features:

- ◇ Is the community well-designed for your needs?
- ◇ Are doorways, hallways, and rooms accommodating to wheelchairs and walkers?
- ◇ Is the community clean, free of odors, and appropriately heated/cooled?
- ◇ Does the community have sprinklers, smoke detectors, and clearly marked exits?
- ◇ Are elevators available for those unable to use stairways?
- ◇ Are cupboards and shelves easy to reach?
- ◇ Does the community have good natural and artificial lighting?

Service & Amenities:

- ◇ Can the community provide a list of care services & amenities available?
- ◇ Is there a nurse on staff?
- ◇ Is staff available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living?
- ◇ What are the training requirements for staff?
- ◇ Does the community provide housekeeping services in personal living spaces?
- ◇ Does the community provide scheduled transportation to doctors' offices, the hair-dresser, shopping, and other activities desired by residents?
- ◇ Are barber/beautician services offered on-site?

Residency, Cost & Care:

- ◇ Is there a written plan of care for each resident? How frequently is it reviewed and updated?
- ◇ Is a residency agreement available for review before move-in?
- ◇ Is a consumer disclosure form available that discloses personal care and supportive services, all fees, as well as move-in and move-out provisions? What are the policies for refunds and transfers?
- ◇ Are there different costs for various levels or categories of personal care?
- ◇ Do billing, payment, and credit policies seem fair and reasonable?
- ◇ Are the resident bill of rights posted?

Dining, Social and Recreation:

- ◇ Do dining room menus vary from day to day and meal to meal?
- ◇ Are snacks available?
- ◇ Can the community accommodate special dietary needs?
- ◇ May meals be provided at a time a resident would like, or are there set times for meals?
- ◇ Is there evidence of organized activities, such as a posted daily schedule, events in progress, reading materials, visitors, etc.?
- ◇ Does the community create a sense of inclusion by encouraging residents to participate in activities?

Apartment Features:

- ◇ Are different sizes and types of apartments available?
- ◇ Are apartments for single and double occupancy available?
- ◇ Is a 24-hour emergency response system accessible from the apartment?
- ◇ Are residents able to bring their own furnishings for their apartment? What may they bring? What is provided?
- ◇ Do all apartments have a telephone, cable or satellite TV, and internet access? How is billing handled?
- ◇ May residents decorate their own apartments?

Tip:

It is important to find an environment that you or your loved one will feel most comfortable at. Some communities are very beautiful and often you can be “blown away” by the decorations and furnishings. But this will be your new home and you may feel more comfortable in a place that is less fancy. It is important to look for a place that you know you or your loved one can feel the most like themselves at. The most expensive communities don't always provide the best care and attention.

Look beyond the decorations!



Remember:

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Other Questions to ask:

- ◇ Does the community have a clearly stated procedure for responding to a resident's medical emergency?
- ◇ To what extent are ancillary services such as hospice or physical therapy available, and how are these services provided?
- ◇ Does the community have specific policies regarding storage of medication, assistance with medications, training and supervision of staff, and record keeping?
- ◇ Does the community conduct criminal background checks on employees?
- ◇ Does the community train staff on elder abuse and neglect? Is there a policy for reporting suspected abuse?
- ◇ Does the community accept long-term care insurance?
- ◇ Is the state inspection report available for review?
- ◇ What are the most common reasons why a resident may be asked to move out of the community?
- ◇ Do volunteers, including family members, come into the community to help with or to conduct programs?
- ◇ Are residents' pets allowed in the community? Who is responsible for their care?
- ◇ Is there a complaints process for dissatisfied residents?