



What to Expect When Entering a Long-Term Care Facility

MU Patient Education Series

A long-term care facility provides full-time medical and non-medical care for individuals who can no longer care for themselves. Nursing homes are long-term care facilities. Nursing homes include daily living assistance, social services, dietary services, medical services, laundry services and more. Moving into a nursing home is a drastic change. It is important to mentally and physically prepare yourself for this change. It is essential that you find the home that best suits you. Everyone has different needs and preferences, and different homes accommodate these various needs. You must ask questions and conduct much research before you decide on a home.

QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK:

Upon beginning your search for the right nursing home, you should create a list of your personal expectations. Bring this list with you on your visits and make sure that the home you choose fulfills the majority of your criteria. Below is some questions you should ask the facility when you visit.

Basic Requirements:

- Is the level of care I need available?
- Is the facility close to my family and friends?
- Are there specialized services?
- Is the facility Medicare/Medicaid certified?

Food:

- Are there a variety of choices offered at each meal?
- Are snacks available during the day?
- Is the food appealing?
- Would my family and friends enjoy eating this food?
- Are the current residents enjoying the food?
- Are there staff members available to help during meal times?



Staff:

- Is the staff interacting well with the current residents?
- Does the staff receive on-going training?
- Are there doctors that are on-call?
- Are the staff members background-checked?
- Are there staff members available all throughout the facility?
- Are the residents properly and appropriately supervised?

Services:

- Are there therapies offered?
- Are there transportation services?
- Are there barbers available?
- Are there religious services?

Residents:

- Do the current residents seem content?
- What is the response time for patient care?
- Are there televisions in the room?
- Are there telephones in the room?

Facility:

- Is the facility clean?
- Are there activity and common rooms?
- Are there quiet areas?
- Do the visitors seem happy?
- Is it too loud?
- Are the rooms comfortable and home-like?
- Is there enough storage space?

Activities:

- Are there activities available?
- Is there a director for activities?
- Do the residents seem to be involved in the activities?



MOVE-IN DAY:

Moving into the nursing home can be a very emotional day. Emotions such as depression, anger, abandonment, denial, doubt, regret, acceptance and anxiety may be experienced. This is a life changing event for everyone involved. You need time to adjust to your new surroundings. It may help to have your loved ones by your side through the beginning. Visits can help make your new living conditions more normal.

When you arrive to the facility, you will most likely be asked to sign a contract. This contract will include a description of the relationship between you and the facility. It will describe the services offered and the rights and responsibilities of the resident. **Be sure to read this document fully and carefully.** Ask questions if you have any. It may also be helpful to have a family member or friend look at the document with you.

Be sure to label all of your belongings! Things may be lost, misplaced or even stolen. Keep your things organized and together to avoid losing them. It is also helpful to try to personalize your room. Though it is likely that you will have a roommate, adding some personality to your room will make the transition much easier.

TIPS ON MAKING THE TRANSITION SMOOTH:

- Bring books and magazines
- Talk to your family and friends about your feelings
- Bring a radio
- Watch television if possible
- Bring some special items from home to make your room feel home-like
- Bring photos and hang them on your wall or in frames
- Bring a calendar
- Ask to go out—either with other residents or family members
- Ask your family and friends to visit often (if possible for them)

Remember, this is not an easy transition! It may be challenging and tense at times. But you need to know that this transition is for the best. Living in the long-term care facility will keep you healthy and will care to your needs. It will take the stress off of you and your friends and family. Ask questions, ask for help and have a positive attitude!

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