

# What You Need to Know About an Assisted Living Community

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## 1. Service Plan

- Designed to help provide care and services to maximize independence and safety to residents.
- Should be assessed by qualified staff monthly if not quarterly.
- What happens when a change in condition occurs, for example your loved one is hospitalized for a short-period of time?
- If loved one's level of care exceeds the care that can be provided in assisted living, what are your options or next steps?

## 2. Costs and Associated Fees

- Ask to see an actual occupancy agreement. This agreement should completely spell out for you the amenities, all care and service packages, plus pricing at the assisted living community.
- A signed occupancy agreement should be done. This is an official agreement to provide care and services between your loved one and the assisted living community.
- Does pricing change frequently? When was the last time there was an increase to pricing? Does the community do a small percentage of increase annually?

## 3. Life Enrichment

- What types of life-enrichment activities are hosted at the assisted living community?
- Is there a bus or transportation option for your loved one? Is this an additional cost?
- If needing a secured memory care community, how are the activities designed to meet the needs of this unique population?
- Ask to see an activity calendar.

## 4. On-site Care Staff

- What type of care staff are available to accommodate your loved one daily and in case of an emergency? How are the care staff trained?
- Is there a nurse on site? If so, what types of care and support does the nurse provide? When is the nurse on site?
- What other support staff are available, i.e. dining, laundry, housekeeping?
- When touring; observe the staff interactions with you and others.
- How does the care team communicate changes in health condition to the family representative?

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## 5. The Dining Experience

- How many meals are provided to assisted living residents? What is included, are there additional costs associated?
- How are special diets accommodated? For example low-salt, or vegetarian options?
- Are family and friends able to dine on site?
- If you are touring, ask for a sample of the food or dining menus.

## 6. Apartment home or unit design and amenities

- Is there a model apartment available? This is a great opportunity to visualize how furnishings important to your loved one may fit within the space.
- Is there scheduled housekeeping in the apartment, and maintenance assistance? What are the costs associated with this?
- What appliances are provided in the assisted living apartment?
- Is there a guest room for family and friends to stay if visiting from out of town?
- Have the assisted living representative show you the amenities in which you feel your loved one truly would enjoy. For example if your loved one enjoys carpentry, is there a woodshop?

## 7. Safety

- If there is a medical emergency with your loved one, what is the process for treatment?
- Is there a personal medical device or emergency pull cord available or provided to your loved one?  
Many times this is included in your fees and services.
- Does the assisted living community have secure entrances? If so, during what time of day?
- Are additional keys, or related devices provided to family?

## 8. Licensure

- Is the community licensed, registered, or both with the state? If so, what is the licensure?
- Have there been any recent surveys? If so, what were the results?

## 9. Additional options for continuum of care as needed

- What additional options for care are available, if and when your loved one may need them? For example, if your loved one needs rehabilitation following a stroke, is there an on site rehabilitation service department?
- What additional health or well-being support is available to your loved one in the comfort of their assisted living community? If they are needing hospice home care, does the community provide this, or contract with a qualified vendor?