

Making the Nursing Home Choice

While placing a loved one in a nursing home is a difficult decision, there may come a time when it is the right one. It will help if you do your homework and trust your instincts. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, the nations nursing homes provide care to over 1.5 million people. Over 90% of these residents are over age 65. Most of the residents are frail and require round-the-clock supervision due to dementia. Things You Need to Know A nursing home is a residence that provides room, meals, nursing and rehabilitative care, medical services and protective supervision to its residents. While someone coming from the hospital may require the services of many long-term care professionals such as nurses, therapists and social workers, a nursing home is not a hospital (acute care) setting. The goal at a nursing home is to help people maintain as much of their independent functioning as possible in a supportive environment. Choosing a Facility One of the first things to consider when making a nursing home choice is the needs of the individual for whom youre providing care, suggest experts at the MetLife Mature Market Institute. Make a list of the special care they need, such as dementia care or various types of therapy. If the person is hospitalized, the discharge planner and/or social workers can assist you in assessing the needs of the individual and locating the appropriate facility. If you are choosing a nursing facility for someone who is presently at home, ask for referrals from your physician, Area Agency on Aging, friends, and family. Other factors such as location, cost, the quality of care, services, size, religious and cultural preferences, and accommodations for special care need to be considered. When youve located a few facilities that youd like to consider more thoroughly, plan on visiting each one, both with scheduled and unscheduled visits, and at different times and on different days of the week. As you are walking around, take note of what you hear and dont hear. Is it silent? Is there activity? How clean does it look? Are the residents dressed appropriately for the season? Most importantly, find out the ratio of nurses to residents is and what is the staff turnover rate? Helpful Hints When youve finally decided on a facility, you [Blue Water Homecare](#) should know your rights and those of your family member. Before you or the resident sign the admissions agreement, understand what youre signing, and do not sign any paperwork unless everything has been fully explained.



The admissions contract should, at a minimum, contain the daily room rate, reasons for discharge and transfer from the nursing home, and the policy regarding payment of the daily room rate if the resident goes to the hospital or the family brings the resident home for a short period of time. You may question if youre really making the right decision to place your loved one in a facility at all. Remember, you can do no more than your best, and if youve done that, neither you nor your family member can ask any more of you.