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# CHOOSING ASSISTED LIVING

*It's A Very Big Decision That Can Last A Lifetime*

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Finding the right Assisted Living community may be one of the most important and difficult decisions that you are asked to make - either for yourself or a member of your family. A selected community will often be "home" for the remainder of a person's life. So it is important that you base your decision on complete and timely information.

When faced with this decision, it is commonly recommended that you visit at least 3 communities to help you understand what is offered, what you want and what you really need. Visit each community more than once. The first time should be with the staff assisting you. The others should be unscheduled visits at different times of the day.

Sometimes this decision must be made quickly, such as when an individual is ready to leave the hospital, but can no longer live safely on their own. However, it should never be a rash, uninformed choice.



*The process of choosing assisted living may be filled with a variety of emotions. Writing down questions ahead of time can help a person to maintain focus and discuss all their vital issues.*

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## WHAT TO CONSIDER

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If at all possible, when choosing an assisted living community, take the time to observe the facility in action. While there, chat with residents (and their family members, if possible). Ask their opinion of the facility and if they would show you around.

Here is a list of important items to consider, even if you do not have much time to plan ahead.

- ◆ **Activities** – Does the facility have a diverse in-house activity program and do they provide transportation to local activities?
- ◆ **Building/Grounds** – Is the facility well kept, clean and attractive...inside and out?
- ◆ **Financial** – Find out what the monthly fees do and do not cover, and the cost of add-ons.
- ◆ **Living Quarters** – Is there adequate personal space and privacy for each resident?
- ◆ **Location** – Is the facility close to the personal doctor, hospital, family and friends?
- ◆ **Meals** – Is the menu overseen by a licensed nutritionist and appropriate for seniors? Are special diets accommodated – for example low salt? Are meals delivered to those who are unable or unwilling to eat in the dining room? Are snacks available?
- ◆ **Medication** – Does the facility have a strong medication management program? Does the staff monitor residents on new medications for possible adverse side effects?
- ◆ **Safety/Security** – Does the safety and security of the facility fit its residents needs?
- ◆ **Staff** – Does the staff pay attention to resident desires and needs? Do they treat individual residents with respect? Make sure you are comfortable with the staff to resident ratio. How often does the staff change employment?

**Note:** It is important to share your findings with all those who are affected by this decision.



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