

# Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Name of nursing home: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Basic information	Notes
Is the nursing home Medicare-certified?*	
Is the nursing home Medicaid-certified?*	
What state agency licensed the nursing home and administrator?	
Does the nursing home have any openings?	
Does the nursing home offer specialized training for staff to support residents living with dementia?	
Is the nursing home located close enough for my friends and family to visit? (A question for yourself)	
Are there resident policies I must follow? Will I get a written copy of these policies?	
Are there extra charges for other services, like beauty shop services?	
<p>Will the nursing home tell me in writing about their services, charges, and fees before I move into the home?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Medicare- and/or Medicaid-certified nursing homes must tell you this information in writing. Get a copy of the fee schedule to find out which services are available, which are included in your monthly fee, and which services cost extra. Then, compare nursing home costs.</p>	


\*"Certified" means the nursing home passed an inspection conducted by a state government agency. Medicare and Medicaid only cover care from certified nursing homes.

## Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Safety & care	Notes
What is the nursing home's rating (overall star, health inspections, staffing, quality measures) at <a href="https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare">Medicare.gov/care-compare</a> ?	
What is the nursing home doing to improve quality and staffing?	
Can I still see my personal doctor? If needed, does the facility help arrange transportation for this purpose?	
What hospitals does the nursing home have arrangements with?	
Will I get preventive care to stay healthy? Are eye doctors, ear doctors, and podiatrists available, or does the facility help make arrangements for me to see specialists like these?	
How will I get access to oral care?	
How will I get access to mental health care?	
<p>Does the nursing home's inspection report show quality of care problems or other citations (failure to meet one or more state or federal requirements)?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> The nursing home must make its most recent state or federal survey report available in a public place. It tells you how well the nursing home meets federal health and safety regulations. You can also find it, and older reports, at <a href="https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare">Medicare.gov/care-compare</a> and on most state survey agency websites.</p>	
<p>Has the nursing home corrected all citations on its last state inspection report?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If there's an issue at the nursing home that concerns you, ask what they've done or are doing to correct it.</p>	
How will the facility inform me and my family about its emergency/disaster preparation and response plan?	

Visit [Medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare) for more information.

## Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Preventing abuse	Notes
Is the relationship between staff and residents warm, polite, and respectful?	
How does the nursing home check to make sure it doesn't hire staff members with a finding or history of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of residents in the state nurse aid registry?	
What are the nursing home's policies and procedures on prohibiting and reporting abuse and neglect?	
What training does the nursing home have in place to keep residents safe from abuse, neglect, mistreatment, or exploitation?	
How can people report concerns about resident safety and care?	
How does the facility respond to reported concerns?	
Has the nursing home been cited for issues related to abuse in the last year or two? <b>Note:</b> Nursing homes cited for abuse will have the following icon next to their name on <a href="https://www.medicare.gov">Medicare.gov</a> : 	

Nursing home appearance	Notes
Are residents clean, well-groomed, and appropriately dressed for the season or time of day?	
Is the nursing home free from overwhelming, unpleasant odors?	
Does the nursing home appear clean and well kept?	
Is the temperature in the nursing home comfortable for residents?	
Does the nursing home have good lighting?	
Are the noise levels in the dining room and other common areas comfortable?	

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Nursing home living spaces	Notes
Is the furniture sturdy, yet comfortable and attractive?	
Are exits clearly marked?	
Are there quiet areas where I can visit with friends and family?	
Does the nursing home to have smoke detectors and sprinklers?	
Are all common areas, resident rooms, and doorways designed for wheelchairs?	
Are handrails and grab bars appropriately placed in the hallways and bathrooms?	
Which systems are connected to the nursing home's back-up generator (e.g., heating, air conditioning, lighting)?	

Menus & food	Notes
Will I have a choice of food items at each meal?	
Can the nursing home provide for my individual dietary needs and preferences (like low-salt or no-sugar-added diets)?	
Are nutritious snacks available?	
Can the staff help me eat and drink at mealtimes, if needed?	

## Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Staff	Notes
Are staff observed before entering my rooms?	
Will staff refer to me by name?	
What training and continuing education is given to staff?	
Are the staffing levels posted where residents can see it at any time?	
Do Certified Nurse Aids (CNAs) help plan the care of residents?	
How many nurses, including CNAs, will be available to help me during the day, at night, and on weekends? <b>Note:</b> The nursing home is required to post this information.	
Will the same staff take care of me day to day, or will they change?	
Are there staff assigned to meet my social service needs, and can I meet with them?	
Will staff call my personal doctor or their medical director when I have a medical need?	
Does the staff speak my primary language? If not, is an interpreter available or another system in place to help me communicate my needs?	

Residents' rooms	Notes
Is there a private room available? If I need Medicaid in the future, will I still be able to have a private room?	
How much of my own furniture and belongings can I have in my room?	
Will I have storage space (closet and drawers) in my room?	
Will I have a window in my bedroom?	

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Residents' rooms	Notes
Will I have access to internet, a computer, a personal phone, and television?	
Will I have a choice of roommates?	
Are there policies and procedures to protect residents' possessions, including lockable cabinets and closets?	

Activities	Notes
How do residents, including those who are unable to leave their rooms, choose to take part in a variety of activities?	
Can I help plan or choose the activities that are available?	
Does the nursing home have outdoor areas for me to use?	
Is staff available to help me go outside if I want to?	
Does the nursing home have an active volunteer program?	
Can I decide what time to get up, go to sleep, or bathe?	
If my visitors need to visit early or late, or I want them to come early or late, how will they get in and out of the building when it locks at night?	
What procedure would I follow if I want to leave the nursing home for a few hours or days if I choose to do so? Are there procedures for leaving?	
How will the nursing home help me participate in social and recreational activities?	
How will the nursing home help support my religious or cultural needs?	
Does the nursing home offer transportation to activities in the nearby community?	

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## Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Caring for residents with dementia	Notes
Does the nursing home have specific policies and procedures related to the care of residents with dementia?	
If so, does the policy include the use of non-medication based approaches to care as a first attempt to respond to behavioral symptoms (which are often a means of communication) for residents living with dementia?	
Have staff received additional training on dementia care?	
What are the staff-to-resident ratios for dementia care?	
Will I have easy access to a safe outdoor area, including if I'm in a locked unit?	
Does the nursing home offer activities at night when residents may be awake?	
What percentage of residents with a diagnosis of dementia are currently prescribed an antipsychotic medication?	
What's the nursing home's current rate of antipsychotic medication use?	
Does the nursing home participate in any efforts related to reducing antipsychotic medication use in nursing homes (like the National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care)?	

## Questions to Ask When You Visit a Nursing Home

Questions for a resident group meeting, if you can attend one. These are usually organized by residents or their families.	Notes
What changes did the nursing home make to improve the quality of life for residents in the last year?	
What are the plans for future improvements?	
How has the nursing home responded to recommendations for improvement?	
Who does the group report to?	
How does membership in the group work?	
Who sets the agenda for meetings?	
How are decisions made (for example, by voting, consensus, or by an individual)?	

You have the right to get Medicare information in an accessible format, like large print, braille, or audio. You also have the right to file a complaint if you feel you've been discriminated against. Visit [Medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice](https://www.medicare.gov/about-us/accessibility-nondiscrimination-notice), or call 1-800-MEDICARE for more information.

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