

Choosing an Assisted Living Facility¹

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Assisted living facilities are a type of housing for frail elders and people with physical and mental disabilities who don't need nursing care but cannot live independently (AoA; Ball et al., 2000).

These residences offer personal care, health care, around-the-clock supervision, and other services. With a wide variety of facilities out there, selecting a residence may be difficult.

If you or a family member is thinking about a move to an assisted living residence, it's important to visit several times and to make at least one unannounced visit. Look for a warm, home-like atmosphere where residents seem happy and staff members are friendly. The facility should be easy to get around with a walker or wheelchair, be comfortably cooled or heated, and have a security plan.

Visit during mealtime to check out the quality of the food, where and when it is served, and residents' enjoyment of their meal and time together. You'll want to see the rooms to envision whether they are large enough to meet your needs for kitchen and bathroom space.

There are many other questions family members will want to consider, such as whether it offers social, recreational, and spiritual activities, and whether transportation is provided. Also, check with the Better Business Bureau or the state agency on aging for any complaints against the facility and be certain the facility is licensed. Make sure you know what

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is included in the monthly rate and the costs of any other needed services. Request a sample contract and read it carefully, getting any advice you need from people you trust.

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