



Questions to Consider When Seeking Long-Term Care

In seeking care for a loved one with Alzheimer's or a related disorder, consider the following questions:

Does the facility provide dementia specific care? Is there a special area, unit or wing that provides specialized care?

What criteria are used for admission?

What are the diagnosis and functional capacities of the other residents? How does this fit with your family member's needs?

Is the environment clean, calm and pleasant? Do residents appear to be well cared for, happy and engaged in conversation or activities? Does the staff appear to be communicating and connecting with residents?

How are new residents supported during the adjustment to their new surroundings? Are families encouraged to visit often?

Has the staff been trained to provide dementia-specific care? Is this training provided regularly?

Is there a special activities program for residents with Alzheimer's to mitigate anxiety and agitation? Is it full-time or part-time? If there is not a dementia-specific activities program, do activities meet the special needs of residents with dementia?

How are resident needs identified and goals addressed in an individualized plan of care? Is care planning done by a staff team from various departments with cooperative professional expertise? Is the family involved in or informed about the care plan meeting?

If issues develop with challenging behaviors that are characteristic to middle stage Alzheimer's (agitation, restlessness, sundowning), how are they addressed? Does the facility develop a care plan that includes strategic approaches to limiting or modifying the difficult behavior?

Are there security measures in place to discourage and prevent wandering?

Are there areas where residents can wander safely without feeling confined?

Is there a safe, accessible outdoor area with shade and comfortable seating?

Are there outdoor activities available and interesting things to see?

Is there adequate staffing throughout the day? What is staffing like at night and on weekends?

What are the policies related to discharge or transfer of a resident?

What happens if a resident is considered inappropriate for the program? What are the policies related to transferring a patient to a hospital?

What happens if resources are exhausted? Can a person who has been private pay transition to the Medicaid program and remain in the facility?

Is the facility capable of helping your family member to age in place, or is there a limit to the extent of care offered?