

# Nursing home checklist

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

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

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

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

Basic information	Yes	No	Notes
Is the nursing home Medicare certified?			
Is the nursing home Medicaid certified?			
<p><b>Note:</b> “Certified” means the nursing home passed an inspection conducted by a state government agency. Medicare and Medicaid only cover care from nursing homes that are certified. If they’re certified, make sure they haven’t recently lost their certification or are about to lose their certification.</p>			
<p>Are the nursing home and current administrator licensed in my state?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> This means nursing homes have met certain standards set by a state or local government agency.</p>			
Does the nursing home have a bed available?			
Does the nursing home offer specialized services, like a special care unit for a resident with dementia or ventilator care? (Remember: all nursing homes are required to provide rehabilitation services.)			
Is the nursing home located close enough for friends and family to visit?			

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Basic information	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Are there resident policies I must follow? Will I get a written copy of these policies?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Resident policies are rules that all residents must follow (for example, smoking may not be allowed in or around some nursing homes).</p>			
<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>			
<p>Are there extra charges for other services, like beauty shop services?</p>			

Resident appearance	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Are residents clean, well groomed, and appropriately dressed for the season or time of day?</p>			

Nursing home living spaces	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Is the nursing home free from overwhelming unpleasant odors?</p>			
<p>Does the nursing home appear clean and well kept?</p>			

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<b>Nursing home living spaces</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
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?			
Is smoking allowed? If so, is it restricted to certain areas of the nursing home?			
Is the furniture sturdy, yet comfortable and attractive?			

<b>Menus &amp; food</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Do residents have a choice of food items at each meal? Do they serve your favorite foods?			
Can the nursing home provide for special dietary needs (like low-salt or no-sugar-added diets)?			
Are nutritious snacks available if you ask for them?			
Does the staff help residents eat and drink at mealtimes if help is needed?			

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Does the relationship between staff and residents appear to be warm, polite, and respectful?			
Do staff wear name tags?			

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Staff	Yes	No	Notes
Do staff knock on the door before entering a resident's room?			
Do staff refer to residents by name?			
Does the nursing home offer a training and continuing education program for all staff?			
Is there a licensed nursing staff 24 hours a day, including a Registered Nurse (RN) present at least 8 hours per day, 7 days a week?			
Does the nursing home check to make sure they don't hire staff members who have been found guilty of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of residents, or have a finding of abuse, neglect, or mistreatment of residents in the state nurse aid registry?			
Will a team of nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) work with me to meet my needs?			
Do CNAs help plan the care of residents?			
Is there a person on staff that will be assigned to meet my social service needs?			
Will staff call my doctor for me if I have a medical need?			
Has there been a turnover in administration staff, like the administrator or director of nurses, in the past year?			

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Staff	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Does the nursing home post information about the number of nursing staff, including Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)? Are they willing to show me if I ask to see it?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Nursing homes are required to post this information.</p>			
<p>Is there a social worker available? Can I meet him or her?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Nursing homes must provide medically related social services, but if the nursing home has less than 120 beds, it doesn't have to have a full-time social worker on staff.</p>			
<p>Is my primary language spoken by staff that will work directly with me and fellow residents? If not, is an interpreter available or another system in place to help me communicate my needs?</p>			

Residents' rooms	Yes	No	Notes
Can residents have personal belongings and furniture in their rooms?			
Does each resident have storage space (closet and drawers) in his or her room?			
Does each resident have a window in his or her bedroom?			
Do residents have access to internet, a computer, a personal phone, and television?			
Do residents have a choice of roommates?			

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Residents' rooms	Yes	No	Notes
Are there policies and procedures to protect residents' possessions, including lockable cabinets and closets?			

Hallway, stairs, lounges, & bathrooms	Yes	No	Notes
Are exits clearly marked?			
Are there quiet areas where residents can visit with friends and family?			
Does the nursing home 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?			

Activities	Yes	No	Notes
Can residents, including those who are unable to leave their rooms, choose to take part in a variety of activities?			
Do residents help plan or choose activities that are available?			
Does the nursing home have outdoor areas for resident use? Is staff available to help residents go outside?			
Does the nursing home have an active volunteer program?			
Do I get to choose what time to get up, go to sleep, or bathe?			

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Activities	Yes	No	Notes
Can I have visitors at any time? Will the nursing home let me see visitors who may come to visit at early or late hours?			
Would I be able to leave the facility for a few hours or days if I choose to do so? Are there procedures for leaving?			
Does the nursing home offer the religious or cultural support I need? If not, what type of arrangements will they provide to meet my needs?			

Safety & care	Yes	No	Notes
Can residents still see their personal doctors? Does the facility help arrange transportation for this purpose?			
Does the nursing home have an arrangement with a nearby hospital?			
Are care plan meetings held with residents and family members at times that are convenient and flexible whenever possible?			
Does the nursing home's inspection report show quality of care problems or other deficiencies?			
Has the nursing home corrected all deficiencies (failure to meet one or more state or federal requirements) on its last state inspection report?			

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Safety & care	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Does the nursing home have the most recent health and fire inspection reports for me to look at?</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Ask staff to provide these reports. They tell you how well the nursing home meets federal health and safety regulations. The nursing home must have the report of the most recent state or federal survey of the facility available for you to look at. Reports can also be found on most state agency websites and on Nursing Home Compare at <a href="http://Medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare">Medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare</a>.</p>			
<p>Does the nursing home have specific policies and procedures related to the care of individuals 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?</p>			
<p>What percentage of resident's who have a diagnosis of dementia are currently being prescribed an antipsychotic medication?</p>			
<p>What's the nursing home's current rate of antipsychotic medication use?</p>			
<p>Does the nursing home participate in any efforts related to reducing the use of antipsychotic medication in nursing homes? (These include National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care, National Nursing Home Quality Care Collaborative, and National Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign.)</p>			

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## Nursing home checklist

### Go to a resident council or family council meeting

While you're visiting the nursing home, we recommend that you ask a member of the resident council if you can attend a resident council or family council meeting. These councils are usually organized and managed by the residents or the residents' families to address concerns and improve the quality of care and life for the resident.

If you're able to go to a meeting, ask a council member these questions:

- What improvements were made to 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 council report to?
- How does membership on the council work?
- Who sets the agendas for meetings?
- How are decisions made (for example, by voting, consensus, or one person makes them)?

### Visit again

It's a good idea to visit the nursing home a second time. It's best to visit a nursing home on a different day of the week and at a different time of day than your initial visit. Staffing can be different at different times of the day and on weekends.