

20 Questions to Ask When Touring a Skilled Nursing Facility

A Parent Care Workshop Resource

Choosing a skilled nursing facility is one of the most important decisions you'll make for a loved one. While every facility can look beautiful during a tour, asking the right questions can help you better understand the quality of care, staffing, safety, and overall resident experience.

Bring this checklist with you and write down the answers at each community you visit. Comparing facilities side by side can make your decision much easier.

Resident Care

- 1. What is the staff-to-resident ratio during the day, evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays?
- 2. Is a registered nurse (RN) on-site 24 hours a day?
- 3. How are changes in a resident's condition communicated to families?
- 4. How often are care plans reviewed and are family members invited to participate?

Rehabilitation & Medical Care

- 5. What rehabilitation services are available (physical, occupational, and speech therapy)?
- 6. How many therapy days are typically offered each week?
- 7. Does the facility have an attending physician, nurse practitioner, or medical director who regularly visits residents?
- 8. What happens if my loved one needs to go to the hospital?

Staffing

- 9. What is your staff turnover rate?
- 10. How long have your Director of Nursing and Administrator been with the facility?
- 11. How are new employees trained?
- 12. How are temporary or agency staff used?

Safety

- 13. How are falls prevented and monitored?
- 14. What infection prevention procedures are in place?
- 15. How are medications managed and reviewed?
- 16. How do you respond to medical emergencies?

Daily Living

- 17. How are meals prepared, and can dietary needs be accommodated?
- 18. What activities and social programs are offered each week?
- 19. What are visiting hours, and are families encouraged to participate in care?
- 20. What services are included in the daily rate, and what additional charges should families expect?

Don't Forget to Observe

Sometimes what you **see** is just as important as the answers you hear.

While touring, ask yourself:

- ✓ Does the facility smell clean?
- ✓ Are residents clean, dressed, and engaged?
- ✓ Are staff smiling and interacting respectfully?
- ✓ Do call lights appear to be answered promptly?
- ✓ Are common areas clean and well maintained?
- ✓ Does the atmosphere feel calm, welcoming, and safe?
- ✓ Would I feel comfortable if this were my own home?

Compare Facilities Before You Decide

Before choosing a skilled nursing facility, review its ratings and inspection history using **Medicare Care Compare**, the official tool from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

With Care Compare, you can:

- Compare nearby skilled nursing facilities
- Review overall star ratings
- View health inspection results
- Compare staffing levels
- Review quality measures
- Find Medicare-certified facilities

Official Medicare Care Compare website:

<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>

Helpful Tip

No single rating or tour should determine your decision. Visit more than once if possible—try stopping by on different days and at different times. Observe how staff interact with residents when a formal tour isn't taking place, and don't hesitate to ask follow-up questions. Trust both the information you gather and your instincts.

Important Disclaimer

This checklist is provided by Parent Care Workshop for educational and informational purposes only. It is not intended to provide medical, legal, financial, insurance, or professional advice and should not be used as the sole basis for selecting a skilled nursing facility.

Every resident's medical, financial, and personal needs are unique. Facility staffing, services, ownership, inspection results, quality ratings, costs, Medicare participation, and state regulations may change over time. Families are encouraged to independently verify all information directly with each facility, review current inspection reports and Medicare Care Compare ratings, consult healthcare professionals, and seek legal or financial guidance when appropriate. Parent Care Workshop does not endorse, certify, recommend, or guarantee any specific facility or provider. By using this guide, you acknowledge that decisions regarding long-term care remain the responsibility of you and your family.

Parent Care Workshop

Helping families navigate the journey of caring for aging parents with confidence, practical resources, and compassionate guidance.