



Your Guide to Touring a Senior Living Community

Touring multiple senior living communities can be very time-consuming. It's easy when you're going from community to community to miss some details. We've put together this guide to help you, your family and your loved one track what you like, what you don't like and how to evaluate the communities and find the best fit for your loved one.

To help you keep track of the facilities you've toured, we provided an opportunity to rate each of the criteria below on a 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent) scale. At the end of this guide, we offer a way to compile all your ratings so you can begin to narrow down your options.

We invite your family and loved one to do their own ratings, too. It's a great way to talk about what's important to each of you and make the best decision for your family.

Start by entering the name of each facility that you tour below:

Community A Name: _____

Community B Name: _____

Community C Name: _____

Community D Name: _____

Community E Name: _____

Tips:

- Start by asking your loved one which of these factors is most important to them.
- Once you've narrowed down your top options, visit the communities again—this time at a different time of day—and compare to your initial visit.
- Arrive for your tour 10-15 minutes early or show up with an appointment so you can see how the senior living community typically operates rather than in a prepared visit.
- If possible, take a few minutes to speak with residents or their family members to gain some added perspective.
- Ask to see the most recent state inspection survey.

What's most important to you or your loved one?

We've arranged these pages so you or your loved one can quickly locate the criteria you need. On each page, we've listed a series of questions to help you get the conversation started. You and your loved one will no doubt have others. Plus, you'll have an opportunity to rate each community and then roll those numbers up on the last page for your total ratings.

Activities & Amenities — 2

Cost & Financing — 3

Family Involvement — 4

General — 5

Living Units — 6

Meals & Dining — 7

Medical Care — 8

Safety Enhancements — 9

Staff — 10

Well-Being — 11

Community Living

Evaluation — 12



Activities & Amenities

Most senior living communities offer a full slate of activities and amenities. Do they match your loved ones' needs? The only way to find out is to ask questions!

- What types of amenities do you offer?
- What types of activities are available?
- Is there a posted schedule of activities? How are residents reminded of activities?
- Is there an extra charge for certain amenities? If so, which ones?
- Do you have wireless internet or a computer room?
- Are there onsite classes or lectures?
- Do you regularly host social events?
- How often are off-site outings offered?
- Are there any additional costs for certain activities?
- Is transportation available and how do residents use it?
- Are family and friends able to join their loved ones in activities?

Tips:

- If your loved one has a specific hobby or pastime they like to pursue, ask about the options for continuing to pursue that hobby or activity.
- Schedule your tour at that same time as an activity is taking place to see how the staff interacts with residents or if events are well attended.

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Activities & Amenities.

Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E

Cost & Financing

Senior living communities use multiple pricing models—such as all-inclusive pricing, tiered pricing based on levels of care, a la carte pricing, or other models. Make sure to understand the costs, especially any additional costs over and above the quoted price, so you're fully prepared.

- Do you have a contract or any agreement that we can review?
- How often will you be paying rent?
- What exactly is included in the rent?
- What is the best way to make payment?
- Will a payment reminder be sent by the community?
- Is there a grace period for payment?
- How does the community handle utilities? Who pays for them?

Tips:

- Most communities offer independent living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing—make sure to understand the differences between them so you can help your loved one make the best choice.
- Go off the grid—leave the formal tour group and walk around the facility unchaperoned to see how it feels and how it might work for your loved one.

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Cost & Financing.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Cost & Financing					



Family Involvement

If a facility you're interested in seems less than interested in having a high level of family involvement, you may want to look elsewhere. A good facility should welcome family members and their involvement in their loved one's care.

- What role do you recommend for family?
- What kind of reviews does the community receive?
- Are there certain visiting hours for friends and family?
- What do friends and family think about the community?
- What complaints, if any, have been formally lodged against the facility?
- What's the process for filing a complaint?
- Who draws up residents' care plans? How involved is the resident and family in this process?

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Family Involvement.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Family Involvement					



General

Take note of the building's outside appearance as well as the interior. Make sure that there's plenty of open space for your loved one to pursue their passions, whether through specific activities or just social engagement.

- How do you feel when you walk in?
- Can you imagine calling this community home?
- Do you feel welcome and excited about the future?
- Are the grounds, landscaping, and building exterior well maintained?
- Is there plenty of openness and natural lighting?
- Is the interior well maintained (fresh paint, clean-smelling, clean carpet, comfortable furniture)?
- Are there common areas for residents to socialize?
- Is parking convenient for both visitors and residents?
- Does the community have conveniences nearby (grocery, pharmacy, etc.)?
- How many residents do they have?

Tips:

- One way to evaluate a community living facility and get insight into their staff and operations is to check their online reviews.
- Most communities will have a packet that includes building maps, floor plans, the activity calendar, and a dining menu—ask for yours.
- Most communities have their own website or Facebook pages so you can follow the communities news and activities.

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for General.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
General					

Living Spaces

There's no place like home, as they say, so your loved one's apartment should feel comfortable and cozy. A lot will depend on what they can bring from their home to their new residence. Understanding what they'll experience will help your loved one transition more easily.

- How many living units are in the residence?
- Are there multiple floor plans to choose from?
- Do they include kitchens or kitchenettes?
- Do units have cable TV service and WiFi?
- Can my loved one bring their own furnishings? Is there a limit?
- Are housekeeping and laundry services available?
- Are there additional services and what are the costs?
- Can we see one of the available units on the tour?
- Do you allow short-term stays so our loved one can "try out" the community?

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Living Units.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Living Spaces					



Meals & Dining

What your loved one eats ensures their health and well-being. Understand who prepares the menus and food and what options are available for dining. Find out how meals are prepared and by whom.

- What kind of meal services do they offer?
- Is there a cafe or bistro option? What about a coffee shop?
- How are meals served (buffet style, restaurant, etc.)? Can they be served in-room?
- What times are meals served?
- Who is responsible for putting together menus and what are their qualifications?
- How often are the menus changed? Is the menu diverse and healthy?
- Can you accommodate specific dietary needs or special requests?
- Can family and friends join residents for meals? Is there an additional charge?
- Can we see a sample menu or taste the food?

Tips:

- Be sure to arrive when meals are being served and see if residents look happy and are eating well (that is, there are empty plates!).
- Also, if you're able to have a meal with the residents, take the opportunity to ask them about their experiences there.

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Meals & Dining.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Meals & Dining					



Medical Care

Most independent and assisted living facilities don't provide medical care, but some medical services—such as 24/7 nurse availability—are provided in memory care and skilled nursing units. Make sure to work with the care team to help match your loved one to the right care.

- Will my loved one get the medical care they need, when they need it?
- What kinds of services are available for medical care?
- What specific care is available from doctors, nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and others?
- Where is the nearest hospital, and how quickly can my loved one be admitted in case of emergency?
- Who handles and distributes medication? What training and education do they have?
- Can my loved one have their medical professionals visit them here? Or can they get transportation to a doctor's appointment?

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Medical Care.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Medical Care					

Safety Enhancements

As our loved one ages, falls become more of a concern. For memory care residents, it's important to ensure that they're protected from wandering.

- Is the community easy to navigate and accessible to less mobile residents with features, such as elevators, widened doors, stairlifts, and wheelchair ramps?
- Are the floors free from slipping and tripping?
- Is the community locked at a certain time in the evening/night?
- Do public areas and hallways have safety features, such as handrails?
- Do rooms and bathrooms have grab bars and no-threshold showers, along with call buttons?
- How does my loved one call for help if they need something?
- What precautions are in place to keep residents from wandering?
- Are there security and fire safety systems? What are the plans for evacuation?
- Is there an emergency generator or alternate power source?
- Are there concerns about the surrounding neighborhood? How are these addressed?

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Safety Enhancements.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Safety Enhancements					



Staff

Trained and caring individuals who are responsive to residents' needs can make the difference in your and your loved one's life. Make sure that there are enough trained staff members in the community to tend to residents.

- What kind of training does the team undergo?
- What's the ratio of staff to residents?
- What's the staff turnover rate?
- Do you have staff on-site 24/7?
- How do the staff members treat each other and residents?
- Are staff able to answer your questions clearly and sufficiently?
- Is the management team experienced, effective, and personable?
- Do other team members acknowledge you? Do they strike up conversation when appropriate?
- Is there specialized training if they care for someone with memory loss?

Tips:

- Watch the one-on-one interactions between staff and residents to see how friendly, patient, and compassionate the staff are.
- Be sure to also ask about staff accreditation, background, and training.
- Look for happy residents.

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Staff.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Staff					



Well-Being

Choosing the right senior living community means selecting a facility that can meet your loved one's needs as they change over time. Upon move-in, residents are typically assessed to determine where they best fit in the community and a care plan can be developed for them.

- How does your community welcome a new resident?
- Is an initial assessment of needs conducted for my loved one and who conducts it?
- Will a care plan be developed and who's involved in developing the care plan?
- How often are my loved one's needs re-assessed?
- What additional services are available if the needs of a resident change?
- If my loved one's needs change, would we have to move them somewhere else or do you offer a continuum of services?
- Is the community pet friendly?
- Can my parents stay together even though their care needs are different?

Tips:

- Many communities have a resident council or board who help advocate on behalf of residents—and can be a source of information for you, too!

For each community you visit, assign a rating between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excellent) for Well-Being.

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Well-Being					

Ready, Go...Evaluate!

Now that you're done touring and rated each community, enter the scores for each community by criteria to get closer to making the best decision for your loved one. Add them up to see how each community ranks.

Community A Name: _____

Community B Name: _____

Community C Name: _____

Community D Name: _____

Community E Name: _____

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D	Community E
Activities & Amenities					
Cost & Financing					
Family Involvement					
General					
Living Spaces					
Meals & Dining					
Medical Care					
Safety Enhancements					
Staff					
Well-Being					
TOTAL					