



Find a Nursing Home

Choosing a nursing home is an important decision. There may be other long-term services and supports that fit your needs such as receiving care in your home. If you decide that a nursing home is the right choice, here are some resources to help find a facility that best meets your needs.

Locate a facility and explore options.

- Check with your family and friends. Ask about their experiences with nursing homes.
- Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in your area and ask for a list of facilities.
 - ▶ To find a program near you, call **800-252-2412**.
 - ▶ Enter your five digit ZIP code to be directed to an ombudsman in your area.
 - ▶ Or use the "*Find an LTC Ombudsman in Your Area*" feature on the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman website at apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/.
- Ask an ombudsman about complaints in your nursing home top choices.
- Review federal data on nursing homes at *Nursing Home Compare* at medicare.gov/NursingHomeCompare.
 - ▶ This website provides current facility inspection results from nursing homes participating in Medicare and Medicaid.
 - ▶ An ombudsman can help you understand the facility survey results.
- Visit the Texas Health and Human Services *Long-Term Care Provider Search* at apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch.
- Read the *Consumer Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home* at nursinghomeaction.org/public/50_156_455.cfm. A printable PDF is available.

Visit the nursing home.

- Take a tour of the nursing home.

- Go back unannounced one or more times, including mealtimes, evenings and weekends.
- Talk to current residents and any family or friends who may be visiting.
- Ask to review the facility's most recent survey reports.
 - ▶ A survey report provides information about a facility's state inspection.
 - ▶ An ombudsman can help you understand a survey report.
- Determine how far the nursing home is from your family and friends and how easy it will be for them to visit you.

Explore nursing home services and costs.

- What services are included in the rate you will pay?
- What is the cost of additional services or assistance offered at the facility?
- Do you need specialized care? If yes, ask the facility if it provides the care you require.
- Is there an additional cost for transportation and under what circumstances do fees apply?

Explore options to pay for your care.

- What payer sources does the facility accept?
 - ▶ For example, do they accept Medicare, Medicaid, private pay only (payments using your money)?
 - ▶ Do they accept long-term care insurance?
 - ▶ Note: **Medicare does not pay for long-term living and care at a nursing home.** Medicare pays for rehabilitation at a nursing home under some circumstances.
- Learn about and apply for benefits like Medicaid.
 - ▶ Visit the *Your Texas Benefits* website at yourtexasbenefits.com.
 - ▶ If you don't have computer access, call **2-1-1**. Choose Option 1 to find long-term services in your area. Choose Option 2 for help with state benefits like Medicaid.
- Contact an Area Agency on Aging benefits counselor for free advice.
 - ▶ Call **800-252-9240**.
 - ▶ Enter your five digit ZIP code to be directed to your local AAA.
 - ▶ Or find the *AAA Directory* at apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm.
 - ▶ A benefits counselor can tell you about eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

- Visit the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman *Paying for Care* webpage at apps.hhs.texas.gov/news_info/ombudsman/financing.html.
- Contact your long-term care insurance provider, if applicable. Ask if and when your policy pays for nursing home care and what you need to do to start using it.

Ask about facility and resident policies.

- What is the facility policy about administering CPR to residents?
- Under what circumstances can you be asked to leave?
- Ask to review the facility's resident handbook or resident policies.
- What if you have a conflict with another resident or a staff member?
- How can you file a complaint, if needed?

Ask about staffing and staff training.

- How many residents are assigned to each aide or nurse?
 - ▶ This is also called the staff-to-resident ratio.
 - ▶ How do they determine the number of staff required on each shift?
- Will the same aides be consistently assigned to you on each shift?
 - ▶ This is a best practice in resident care.
- What training and experience do nursing home staff have?
- If the facility offers specialized care, what specialized training do staff receive to assist residents requiring this type of care?
- How much experience does the nursing home have in providing the services you require?

Ask how your needs, routines and preferences will be met.

- What preferences or routines are important to you?
 - ▶ For example, do you like staying up late at night or eating breakfast late?
 - ▶ Do you like bathes instead of showers?
 - ▶ Ask how staff will meet those needs, preferences and routines.
- Can you share a room with the person of your choice as long as that person agrees?

Helpful resources

- AARP, Nursing Homes: What to Ask - Checklist: assets.aarp.org/external_sites/caregiving/checklists/checklist_nursingHomes.html.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Your Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home or Other Long-Term Services & Supports (Free PDF download): www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/02174-Nursing-Home-Other-Long-Term-Services.pdf call **800-633-4227**. TTY users can call **877-486-2048**.
- The National Consumer Voice Piecing Together Quality Long-Term Care: A Consumer's Guide to Choices and Advocacy (Free PDF download): [theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/long-term-care-recipient/piecing-together-quality-long-term-care_\(1\).pdf](https://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/long-term-care-recipient/piecing-together-quality-long-term-care_(1).pdf).

Based on "Choosing a Nursing Home" by The Consumer Voice.