Nursing Home Checklist

Visiting nursing homes? Here's a free checklist of things to look for.



Basic Information

- [ ] Is the nursing home Medicare-certified?
- [ ] Does the nursing home have the level of care I need?
- [ ] Does the nursing home have a bed available?
- [ ] Does the nursing home offer specialized services, such as a special unit for care for a resident with dementia, ventilator care, or rehabilitation services?
- [ ] Is the nursing home located close enough for friends and family to visit?

Resident Appearance

- [ ] Are the residents clean, well groomed, and appropriately dressed for the season or time of day?

Nursing Home Living Spaces

- [ ] Is the nursing home free from overwhelming unpleasant odors?
- [ ] Does the nursing home appear clean and well kept?
- [ ] 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?
- [ ] Are the furnishings sturdy, yet comfortable and attractive?

Staff

- [ ] Does the relationship between the staff and residents appear to be warm, polite, and respectful?
- [ ] Does the staff wear name tags?
- [ ] Does the staff knock on the door before entering a resident's room? Do they refer to residents by name?
- [ ] Does the nursing home offer a training and continuing education program for all staff?
- [ ] 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?
- [ ] 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?
- [ ] 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?
- [ ] If I have a medical need, will the staff contact my doctor for me?
- [ ] Has there been a turnover in administration staff, such as the administrator or director of nurses, in the past year?

Residents' Rooms

- [ ] 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 a personal phone and television?
- [ ] Do residents have a choice of roommates?
- [ ] Are there policies and procedures to protect residents' possessions, including lockable cabinets and closets?

Hallway, Stairs, Lounges, and Bathrooms

- [ ] 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 wheelchair use?
- [ ] Are handrails and grab bars appropriately placed in the hallways and bathrooms?

Menus and Food

- [ ] Do residents have a choice of food items at each meal? (Ask if your favorite foods are served.)
- [ ] Can the nursing home provide for special dietary needs (like low-salt or no-sugar-added diets)?
- [ ] Are nutritious snacks available upon request?
- [ ] Does the staff help residents eat and drink at mealtimes if help is needed?

Activities

- [ ] Can residents, including those who are unable to leave their rooms, choose to take part in a variety of activities?
- [ ] Do residents have a role in planning or choosing activities that are available?
- [ ] Does the nursing home have outdoor areas for resident use? Is the staff available to help residents go outside?
- [ ] Does the nursing home have an active volunteer program?

Safety and Care

- [ ] Does the nursing home have an emergency evacuation plan and hold regular fire drills (bed-bound residents included)?
- [ ] Do residents get preventive care, like a yearly flu shot, to help keep them healthy? Does the facility assist in arranging hearing screenings or vision tests?
- [ ] Can residents still see their personal doctors? Does the facility help in arranging transportation for this purpose?
- [ ] Does the nursing home have an arrangement with a nearby hospital for emergencies?
- [ ] Are care plan meetings held with residents and family members at times that are convenient and flexible whenever possible?
- [ ] 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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