Choosing a memory care home: a simple checklist for families

Choosing a home for someone you love is a big decision, and you don't have to figure it out alone. Take this checklist with you, one step at a time, wherever you decide to go.

1 Before you tour: know your loved one's needs

A few notes now will help you ask the right questions later.

- [ ] Daily help they need, like bathing, dressing, meals or getting around
- [ ] Memory changes you've noticed, like wandering, confusion or sleep changes
- [ ] Their medication list and doctors' contact information
- [ ] What brings them joy: routines, hobbies, foods and faith
- [ ] Your monthly budget and payment options, like private pay, long-term care insurance or VA benefits
- [ ] Who in your family will help make the decision

2 Questions to ask on every tour

Write down each home's answers so you can compare later.

- [ ] Is the home licensed for memory care? What type of license?
- [ ] How many caregivers are there for each resident, day and night?
- [ ] Is there a nurse on staff or on call?
- [ ] What dementia training do caregivers receive?
- [ ] Who manages and gives medications?
- [ ] How is a care plan created, and how often is it updated?
- [ ] What happens if my loved one's needs change?
- [ ] What does the monthly rate include, and what costs extra?
- [ ] What are the visiting hours?
- [ ] Can my loved one bring furniture or personal items?

3 What to look and listen for

Trust what you see and how the home feels.

- [ ] Do caregivers greet residents by name?
- [ ] Are residents engaged, not just sitting alone?
- [ ] Does the home feel calm, clean and safe?
- [ ] Are exits secure for residents who may wander?
- [ ] Does the food look and smell good?
- [ ] Did you feel welcomed and listened to?

4 Compare the homes you visit

Fill in what you learned at each home.

	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3
Licensed for memory care			
Caregivers per resident (day / night)			
Nurse on staff or on call			
Dementia training			
Monthly cost			
What's included			
Extra costs			
How it felt			

There's no perfect score. The right home is the one where your loved one will be known, safe and cared for.

5 Getting ready for move-in day

Small, familiar things help a new place feel like home.

- [ ] Schedule the home's care assessment
- [ ] Review the resident agreement and care plan together
- [ ] Pack family photos, a favorite blanket and familiar keepsakes
- [ ] Label clothing and personal items
- [ ] Share your loved one's routines and preferences with the care team
- [ ] Plan your first few visits

NEED GUIDANCE OR SUPPORT?

We're here to help, wherever you decide to go.

Our care team is happy to answer questions about memory care, even if you're just getting started.

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