



Nursing home checklist

Name of nursing home: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Date of visit: _____

Basic information	Yes	No	Notes
Is the nursing home Medicare certified?			
Is the nursing home Medicaid certified?			
Note: “Certified” means the nursing home passed an inspection conducted by a state government agency. Medicare only covers care from nursing homes that are certified.			
Are the nursing home and current administrator licensed in my state?			
Does the nursing home have a bed available?			
Does the nursing home offer specialized services, like a special care unit for a resident with dementia or ventilator care?			
Is the nursing home located close enough for friends and family to visit?			
Are there resident policies I must follow? Will I get a written copy of these policies?			
Are there extra charges for other services, like beauty shop services?			



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Basic information	Yes	No	Notes
<p>Will the nursing home tell me in writing about their services, charges, and fees before I move into the home?</p> <p>Note: Medicare- and/or Medicaid-certified nursing homes must tell you this information in writing. Get a copy of the fee schedule to find out which services are available, which are included in your monthly fee, and which services cost extra. Then, compare nursing home costs.</p>			

Safety & care	Yes	No	Notes
Have you checked the nursing home's star ratings on Medicare.gov?			
Is the nursing home taking action to improve quality or staffing as needed?			
Can residents still see their personal doctors? If needed, does the facility help arrange transportation for this purpose?			
Does the nursing home have an arrangement with a nearby hospital?			
Are care plan meetings held with residents and family members at times that are convenient and flexible whenever possible?			




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Safety & care	Yes	No	Notes
Does the nursing home's inspection report show quality of care problems or other citations (failure to meet one or more state or federal requirements)? Note: The nursing home must have the report of the most recent state or federal survey of the facility available for you to look at. These reports tell you how well the nursing home meets federal health and safety regulations. Reports can also be found on most state survey agency websites and Medicare.gov.			
Has the nursing home corrected all citations on its last state inspection report?			

Preventing abuse	Yes	No	Notes
Does the relationship between staff and residents appear to be warm, polite, and respectful?			
Does the nursing home check to make sure they don't hire staff members with a finding or history of abuse, neglect or mistreatment of residents in the state nurse aid registry?			
Does the nursing home have policies and procedures on prohibiting and reporting abuse and neglect?			
Is the nursing home taking action to keep residents safe from abuse, neglect, mistreatment, or exploitation?			
Is there information about how to report concerns about the care and safety of residents?			

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Preventing abuse	Yes	No	Notes
Is there information about how the facility responds to concerns that are reported?			
Has the nursing home been cited for issues related to abuse in the last year or two? Note: Nursing homes cited for abuse will have the following icon next to their name on Medicare.gov: 			

Nursing home appearance	Yes	No	Notes
Are residents clean, well groomed, and appropriately dressed for the season or time of day?			
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?			

Nursing home living spaces	Yes	No	Notes
Is the furniture sturdy, yet comfortable and attractive?			
Are exits clearly marked?			
Are there quiet areas where residents can visit with friends and family?			



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Nursing home living spaces	Yes	No	Notes
Does the nursing home have smoke detectors and sprinklers?			
Are all common areas, resident rooms, and doorways designed for wheelchairs?			
Are handrails and grab bars appropriately placed in the hallways and bathrooms?			

Menus & food	Yes	No	Notes
Do residents have a choice of food items at each meal? Do they serve foods you like?			
Can the nursing home provide for special dietary needs (like low-salt or no-sugar-added diets)?			
Are nutritious snacks available?			
Does the staff help residents eat and drink at mealtimes, if needed?			

Staff	Yes	No	Notes
Do staff knock on the door before entering a resident's room?			
Do staff refer to residents by name?			
Does the nursing home offer a training and continuing education program for all staff?			
Is there licensed nursing staff 24 hours a day, including a Registered Nurse (RN) present at least 8 hours per day, 7 days a week?			
Do Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) help plan the care of residents?			



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Staff	Yes	No	Notes
How many nurses, including CNAs, will be available to help me during the day, at night, and on weekends? Note: The nursing home is required to post this information.			
Is there a person on staff assigned to meet my social service needs, and can I meet with him or her?			
Will staff call my doctor for me if I have a medical need?			
Has there been a turnover in administrative staff, like the administrator or director of nursing, in the past year?			
Is my primary language spoken by staff? If not, is an interpreter available or another system in place to help me communicate my needs?			

Residents' rooms	Yes	No	Notes
Can residents have personal belongings and furniture in their rooms?			
Does each resident have storage space (closet and drawers) in their room?			
Does each resident have a window in their bedroom?			
Do residents have access to internet, a computer, 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?			

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Activities	Yes	No	Notes
Can residents, including those who are unable to leave their rooms, choose to take part in a variety of activities?			
Do residents help plan or choose the activities that are available?			
Does the nursing home have outdoor areas for resident use?			
Is staff available to help residents go outside?			
Does the nursing home have an active volunteer program?			
Do I get to choose what time to get up, go to sleep, or bathe?			
Can I have visitors at any time – even early or late hours?			
Would I be able to leave the facility for a few hours or days if I choose to do so? Are there procedures for leaving?			
Does the nursing home offer the religious or cultural support I need? If not, what type of arrangements will they provide to meet my needs?			



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Caring for residents with dementia	Yes	No	Notes
Does the nursing home have specific policies and procedures related to the care of residents with dementia?			
If so, does the policy include the use of non-medication based approaches to care as a first attempt to respond to behavioral symptoms (which are often a means of communication) for residents living with dementia?			
What percentage of residents who have a diagnosis of dementia are currently being prescribed an antipsychotic medication?			
What's the nursing home's current rate of antipsychotic medication use?			
Does the nursing home participate in any efforts related to reducing antipsychotic medication use in nursing homes (like the National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care)?			



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Go to a resident or family group meeting

While you're visiting the nursing home, we recommend that you ask if you can attend a resident or family group meeting. These groups are usually organized and managed by the residents or the residents' families to address concerns and improve the quality of care and life for the resident.

If you're able to go to a meeting, ask a group member these questions:

- What improvements were made to the quality of life for residents in the last year?
- What are the plans for future improvements?
- How has the nursing home responded to recommendations for improvement?
- Who does the group report to?
- How does membership in the group work?
- Who sets the agendas for meetings?
- How are decisions made (for example, by voting, consensus, or one person makes them)?

Visit again

It's a good idea to visit the nursing home a second time. It's best to visit a nursing home on a different day of the week and at a different time than your initial visit. Staffing can be different at different times of the day and on weekends.