



U.S. News

Senior Living Tour Checklist

How Do You Feel When You Enter a Facility?

- Does friendly staff greet you?
- Is the building full of natural light and inviting furniture?
- Does the facility feel homey or institutional?
- Can you picture your loved one thriving in this community?

Are Common Areas Inviting?

- Are there living room areas with fireplaces and comfortable seating?
- Do you see any areas to watch television?
- Are there spaces to listen to music, play games and participate in activities?

What Does the Dining Hall Feel Like?

- Is there natural or soft lighting?
- Do residents eat from proper dishes rather than plastic silverware and plates?
- Is there a menu for residents to choose from?
- Do you detect a pleasant aroma that smells like appetizing food?
- Can you try a sample meal?

How Do the Resident Rooms Feel?

- Are the rooms inviting?
- Is there tasteful and clean furniture?
- Do you see any windows or soft lighting?
- Do residents have touches from home, such as a quilt, family photos or a few treasured collectibles?
- Are there activities easily in reach, such as a television, books or radio?
- Do staff knock before entering rooms?
- Do staff greet residents by name when entering their personal space?

Is There Outdoor Space?

- Is there outdoor seating for mealtimes or for visiting and relaxing?
- Do you see pavilions?
- What about walking paths?
- Are there gardens?

What Smells Do You Notice in the Facility?

- Does the common area smell like fresh food or clean laundry?
- Do meals smell fresh and appetizing?
- Do you smell garbage?
- Does the facility do laundry on a consistent basis?
- Is there a space for pets, such as a dog park, and are they well-maintained and odor-free?

How Do the Residents Look?

- Do they look well-groomed and dressed?
- Do they look pleasant and alert?

What Sounds Do You Hear in the Facility?

- Do you hear residents talking and laughing?
- Conversely, are there ignored sounds of yelling and distress from residents or staff?
- Do staff communicate with residents and visitors in a welcoming and respectful tone?
- Are there frequent alarms, which can be disruptive and stressful?
- Do you hear soft background music or sounds of entertaining activities?
- Does the facility have quiet hours?
- Are there policies in place to prevent sleep disruption?

What Safety Measures Are in Place?

- Do you see smoke detectors in every room?
- Are there safety locks on all doors and windows?
- Are there well-marked exits?
- Are security and fire safety systems in place?
- Is there security on-site?
- Do resident rooms have safety features, such as nonslip flooring, grab bars, raised toilet seats and emergency call buttons?
- Does the community have emergency and formal disaster preparedness plans?

Are There Signs of Elder Abuse or Mistreatment?

- Are you observing slow responses to resident requests?
- Does the community seem understaffed?
- Do residents seem socially isolated?
- Are there unsanitary conditions?
- Do residents have bedsores?

Are There Signs the Facility Is Short-Staffed?

- Do staff appear overworked or uninterested in caring for residents?
- Do physicians make rounds? How often? _____
- How many residents are assigned to each nurse? _____
- How many residents are assigned to each nursing assistant? _____
- How often do therapy services meet with residents? _____
- What fall prevention policies are in place? _____
- How are resident falls treated, and how many occur each month? _____
- Is there a “no lift” policy?

Is the Level of Care Offered Right for Your Needs?

- Is the community clear about what levels (independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing care) is available?
- After you or your loved one has undergone a functional status assessment to determine the level of care needed, will the community cover those needs?
- Does the community indicate what number of activities of daily living prospective residents must be able to do? For instance, if you’re considering a nursing home or assisted living for a loved one, how many ADLs should your loved one be able or unable to do independently? _____

Are the Care Plans Personalized?

- Does the community provide a care plan?
- Does the care plan take into account personal preferences?
- Does the care plan provide guidance or a schedule for determining clinical progress?

When Are You Visiting?

- Have you scheduled tours for different times of the day?
- Will you make an unscheduled visit during general visiting hours?

Is the Community Transparent About Cost?

- Has the facility provided a clear, written outline of how their pricing works?
- Are staff evasive about annual increases, what is considered an add-on, general billing practices or late fees?
- If the community is a nonprofit, is there evidence provided detailing where the funding goes?

