



# Long-Term Care Facility Visit Checklist

Questions to Ask and What to Look For

**Facility Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Type:**  Assisted Living  Nursing Home  Memory Care

## PART I: QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR TOUR

### Care & Staffing

- How do you determine the level of care needed, and how often is it reassessed?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio during day, evening, and overnight shifts?
- What training do staff receive? (Ask specifically about dementia training for memory care)
- Is there a nurse on-site 24/7, or on-call? What is the response time?
- How are medical emergencies handled? Which hospital do you use?
- How do you handle changes in a resident's condition or behavioral needs?
- What is staff turnover like? Will my loved one have consistent caregivers?

### Costs & Contracts

- What is included in the base monthly rate?
- What services cost extra? (bathing assistance, medication management, incontinence care, etc.)
- How are "levels of care" determined and priced?
- How much notice is required before a rate increase?
- What happens if my loved one's needs exceed what you can provide?
- Is there a community fee or move-in deposit? Is any of it refundable?
- What is your policy if we need to move out? (notice period, refunds)

### Daily Life & Activities

- What does a typical day look like for residents?
- Can residents choose their wake-up, meal, and bedtime routines?
- What activities and programs are offered? Can I see the calendar?
- How do you encourage participation for residents who are reluctant?
- Are there evening and weekend activities, or just weekdays?
- Can residents personalize their rooms?
- What are the visiting hours? Are there restrictions?

## Meals & Nutrition

- Can I see a sample menu? Can I try a meal during my visit?
- How are dietary restrictions and preferences accommodated?
- Is assistance provided during meals for those who need it?
- Are snacks and beverages available between meals?
- Can family members join for meals? Is there a charge?

## Memory Care Specific (if applicable)

- What safety measures prevent wandering? (secured doors, alarms, monitoring)
- How is care individualized for different stages of dementia?
- What dementia-specific programming do you offer? (music therapy, reminiscence, etc.)
- How do you handle behavioral challenges like agitation or sundowning?
- How do you communicate with families about changes in condition?

## PART 2: WHAT TO OBSERVE DURING YOUR VISIT

As you tour, pay attention to these details. They often reveal more than the marketing materials.

### Resident Appearance & Well-Being

- Do residents appear clean, well-groomed, and appropriately dressed?
- Do they seem content and engaged, or withdrawn and sedated?
- Are residents participating in activities or sitting alone?
- Do you see residents interacting with each other and with staff?

### Staff Behavior & Attitude

- Do staff greet residents by name and speak respectfully?
- Do they make eye contact and interact warmly?
- Does staff seem rushed, stressed, or indifferent?
- How quickly are call bells answered? (Time it if you can)
- Do staff knock before entering rooms?
- Is leadership visible and accessible?

### Environment & Cleanliness

- Is the facility clean and free of persistent odors?
- Are common areas bright, comfortable, and welcoming?
- Are hallways clear of clutter and safe for walking?
- Is the temperature comfortable?
- Are bathrooms clean and well-stocked?
- Are outdoor spaces available and accessible?
- Do rooms appear personalized with residents' belongings?

### Safety Features

- Are there grab bars in bathrooms and hallways?
- Are call bells within reach in rooms and bathrooms?
- Is emergency equipment visible and accessible?
- Are exits clearly marked? (Memory care: are exits secured?)
- Are mobility aids (walkers, wheelchairs) in good condition?

### Dining Experience (try to visit during a meal)

- Does the food look appetizing and fresh?
- Is food served at appropriate temperatures?
- Is the dining room calm and pleasant, or chaotic?
- Are residents receiving help eating if they need it?
- Are drinks easily accessible to residents?

## PART 3: RED FLAGS TO WATCH FOR

*These warning signs may indicate care quality issues. One concern may be explainable; multiple red flags warrant serious consideration.*

- ⚠ Persistent bad odors (urine, feces, or heavy air freshener masking smells)
- ⚠ Residents who appear unkempt, unwashed, or wearing soiled clothing
- ⚠ Unexplained bruises, cuts, or skin breakdown on residents
- ⚠ Residents who seem overly sedated or unresponsive
- ⚠ Staff who speak dismissively or disrespectfully to residents
- ⚠ Long waits for call bells to be answered (10+ minutes)
- ⚠ High staff turnover or difficulty answering staffing questions
- ⚠ Evasive or defensive responses to your questions
- ⚠ Pressure to sign a contract immediately or put down a deposit
- ⚠ Unwillingness to let you visit unannounced or during meals
- ⚠ Residents left sitting alone for extended periods with no engagement
- ⚠ Dining room that feels rushed or chaotic
- ⚠ Lack of personalization in resident rooms
- ⚠ Poor ratings on Medicare Care Compare (for nursing homes)
- ⚠ Recent complaints or violations (check with your state ombudsman)

## NOTES FROM YOUR VISIT

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Overall Impression:**  Strong candidate  Maybe  Not a fit

**Follow-up needed:**  Second visit  Questions to research  Request references

### Need help evaluating facilities or navigating care transitions?

Umbra Health Advocacy's patient advocates can accompany you on facility tours, help you compare options, review contracts, and ensure your loved one gets the care they deserve.

Get started: [www.umbrahealthadvocacy.com/get-started](http://www.umbrahealthadvocacy.com/get-started)