

Alzheimer's San Diego

Choosing a Care Facility



Considering the move to a care facility can be a difficult decision.

There are two main types of care facility options: Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs) and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs). It might be a good idea when evaluating options to revisit the care facilities at different times of day and to bring a friend or relative for another perspective. Here are some resources to help with the decision:

- **Community Care Licensing Division**, www.cclld.ca.gov
- **CA Advocates for Nursing Home Reform**, 800.474.1116, www.canhr.org
- **Nursing Home Compare**, www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare

Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs)

Also referred to as Assisted Living, RCFEs are licensed and regulated by the State of California, Department of Social Services.

- RCFEs provide supervision and assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing and personal care.
- RCFEs are not required to have nurses or doctors on staff and are limited in the types of medical assistance they can provide (such as giving medications).
- Monthly fees are paid privately. Neither Medicare nor private insurance covers the cost of Assisted Living.

Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs)

Also called Convalescent Homes or Nursing Homes, SNFs are licensed and regulated by the California Department of Public Health.

- These also provide assistance with ADLs, personal care, and medical needs.
- However, staff largely consists of nurses, therapists, and nursing assistants who provide care under the supervision of a physician.
- SNFs provide short-term care for those needing rehabilitation (such as physical therapy after a hospital stay) or long-term “custodial” care for those who require a higher level of care and 24-hour supervision.
- Short-term care is typically covered by insurance while long-term is not (unless an individual has Medi-Cal).

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Checklist to help evaluate facilities

CHECK THE LICENSE

- Is their license prominently displayed?
- If residents are using walkers and wheelchairs, is the facility licensed to provide care for NON AMBULATORY residents?
- The license will show the number of residents allowed. How many residents are there?
- Is information on the Long-term care ombudsman Program and Community Care Licensing consumer information readily available to residents and families (as required by law)?
- Is the most recent licensing survey displayed? It will tell you what areas were found to need improvement and how serious the deficiency.

PHYSICAL FACILITY

- Does the facility appear to be well maintained overall?
- Are the common areas clean, comfortable, and pleasant for residents?
- Are there walking paths and other enjoyable outdoor areas?
- Are residents able to enjoy outdoor areas on their own or do they have to wait for staff to escort them?
- Have proper precautions been taken to avoid falls?
- Do resident rooms have both privacy and the ability to call for help when needed?
- Are residents allowed to bring their own furniture or pictures for their rooms?
- Will the length of halls or distance to dining area be a problem for the resident?

QUALITY OF CARE

- Does the staff receive ongoing training and education to work with people living with dementia?
- How does the staff get to know the residents?
- How does the staff deal with symptoms such as agitation and wandering?
- Observe staff interacting with residents; do they treat them with kindness and respect? Do they know their names? Are they aware of their likes/dislikes?
- Observe residents; do they appear well cared for? Are they engaged in stimulating activities?
- Does the staff seem culturally competent? Are they accommodating to other languages spoken?
- Is the staff neatly groomed? Do they appear well-rested and not overworked?
- Does the facility allow hospice care?
- Are there visiting hours?

MEALS AND ACTIVITIES

- Ask to see a menu; does the food appear healthy and appetizing? Is there a good variety/cultural options?
- How does the facility accommodate different dietary needs?
- How do they help those that require assistance at meals?
- Do the activities seem tailored to the abilities of people with dementia? Where do activities take place? Request a copy of the activity schedule.
- Are residents observed to be engaged in some type of stimulating activity?
- Are religious services available at the facility?

CONTRACT/FEE STRUCTURE

What's included in the monthly fee? What services may require an additional fee? Under what circumstances might fees change and how much notice is given if there is a fee increase? Does the contract clearly state under what conditions a resident might be required to move? (For example: change in behavior, health status, and/or change in financial status).

_____ Meals (special diets?)	_____ Assistance with bathing/dressing	_____ Transportation to doctor
_____ Activities/Outings	_____ Personal laundry	_____ Other assistance
_____ Incontinence supplies & care	_____ Medication assistance	