



A Quick Guide to Care

Memory Support

Assisted Living

Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation



Freedom Village of Bradenton

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These resources are provided to help anyone who's looking for information about memory support, assisted living, or skilled nursing and rehabilitation for seniors.

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INTRODUCTION

You care, and we can help.

When it's your loved one, you want the best. And for many people, that means doing it yourself. We understand how much there is to manage when you become a caregiver, and we're eager to support and help equip you for the role. This quick reference guide offers tips and insights for caregiving, along with basic information about memory support, assisted living, and skilled nursing and rehabilitation. And because we appreciate you and what you do, we've included ideas for taking care of yourself too.

We wish you well. And remember,
we're here for you when you need us.

Where to begin Start with Medicare basics

Knowing about Medicare is critical for caregivers.

FOR DETAILED INFORMATION:

Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)
or visit [medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov)

MEDICARE BASICS

Medicare is a federal insurance program for people 65 and older and those who've been disabled for at least two consecutive years. There are several kinds of coverage:

- Medicare Part A covers comprehensive nursing care and rehabilitation services immediately following a hospital stay, limited to a period of 100 days per incident of illness. Part A also covers hospitalization, home health and hospice.
- Medicare Part B helps cover services such as outpatient therapy, durable medical equipment (DME) and other services.
- Medicare Part C provides Advantage Plans/Medicare replacement plans.
- Medicare Part D covers medications.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SKILLED REHAB

For the Medicare Part A benefit, the insured must meet these qualifications:

- Medicare is their primary form of insurance. They can have a secondary insurance policy, but can't have coverage through an HMO/Medicare Advantage Plan.
- They've spent at least three consecutive inpatient midnights in a hospital within the last 30 days.
- They have a qualifying diagnosis and a need for daily skilled services, such as nursing or therapy services.
- Their doctor has written orders allowing them to be discharged from the hospital to a Medicare-certified comprehensive nursing care facility.

WHAT'S USUALLY COVERED

When rehabilitation services are needed, Medicare covers room and board, dietary counseling, medications, medical social services, medical supplies and equipment used, and ambulance transportation (when other transportation endangers health). And when needed as part of the insured's health goals, Medicare also covers physical, occupational and speech therapies.



HEALTHY LIVING TIPS

Consider the triad of nutrition, activity and safety as you collaborate with your loved one on their healthy living plan.



GOOD NUTRITION

The sense of taste and thirst weakens with age, so boost the flavor profiles of meals with lemon juice, herbs and spices. Bump up the appeal further by creating plates of various colored foods prepared with crispy-to-creamy textures. And keep plenty of water and fresh fruits and vegetables readily available all day.

The Nutrients List

Make sure these are in the plan:

- Calcium and vitamin D for bone health
- Vitamin B-12 for healthy metabolism, blood cells, bones and nerves
- Potassium to reduce the risk of high blood pressure
- Fiber to control weight gain and lower risks of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

By being physically active, seniors can lower their mortality rates, raise their cognitive and functional health, and reduce their risks of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. Here are four ideas to help you get them moving:

- Keep it fun with activities they like doing.
- Take it easy with low-impact exercise.
- Build strength with simple regimens of weight lifting or resistance training.
- Rediscover the joy of fresh air and sunshine.

Brains Need Activity, Too

A healthy brain aids motor control, interpretation of and responses to emotions, and how well the body senses function. A sensible plan for brain health is simple:

- Keep connected. Encourage socialization, group activities and volunteerism.
- Keep moving. Consider yoga, gardening, tai chi or even a brisk walk.
- Keep learning. Learn a new skill, try a language, take a class, or find creative expression through art or writing.



HEALTHY LIVING TIPS (CONT.)



SAFE HOME

Prevent falls and increase the safety of the home environment by eliminating tripping hazards, upgrading lighting and paying attention to:

- Floors. Eliminate loose rugs, clutter, and wires and cords, and organize furniture for easy navigation.
- Stairways. Are they stable and secure, and are handrails in place?
- Common areas. Stow away the cleaning materials. Add proper lighting. Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are operating correctly. And keep remote controls and kitchen utensils within easy reach.
- Bathroom. Reduce or eliminate slippery surfaces, install grab bars, and upgrade to hands-free faucets.
- Bedroom. Is it on the main floor, and are drawers and closets easily accessible? Is a phone or intercom system needed?





MEMORY SUPPORT

Alzheimer's disease and other forms of age-related dementia are brain/memory disorders that adversely affect a person's job or lifestyle. Dementia may be caused by stress, depression, nutritional deficiencies, Parkinson's disease or other illnesses. Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia among older people; it involves the part of the brain that controls thought, memory and language. Progressive and degenerative, Alzheimer's usually begins after age 60, and the risk rises with age. Nearly half of those over 85 show symptoms. Still, researchers frequently remind us that Alzheimer's is "not a normal part of aging."

WANT TO KNOW HOW TO SPOT DEMENTIA?

Watch for these behavior and lifestyle changes, and when help is clearly needed, go with your loved one to seek a professional evaluation:

- Problems with walking, talking, eating, dressing, managing medications
- Uncharacteristic in appearance and personal hygiene
- Incontinence
- Wandering
- Loss of short-term memory and diminished reasoning and task completion skills
- Stacks of unopened mail, unpaid bills
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Depression or abuse of alcohol

ADDING MEMORY SUPPORT TO THE CAREGIVER'S JOB

When your loved one has Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, and you're considering providing care yourself, keep these questions in mind:

- Can you make the home secure and safe?
- Can you hire nurses, home health aides, or companions to help with your loved one in your home while giving you time off for yourself?
- Is there a nearby adult day care center for memory-impaired seniors?
- Are there opportunities for interaction and mental stimulation for your loved one beyond what you offer as the caregiver?
- Do you have a reliable network for your emotional support?

PRACTICAL TIPS

In the early stages of dementia-related conditions, home care may be the best option. You can begin to prepare yourself for a caregiver role by familiarizing yourself with these guidelines.

- Talk with family and friends as soon as you know the diagnosis; continue to communicate regularly and often.
- Ask for and accept practical help.
- Try to keep a balanced schedule for yourself and your family member.
- Learn everything you can about the condition.
- Simplify the environment for your loved one.
- Do things slowly for the affected person.
- Distract if there's confusion.
- Acknowledge the disability.
- Treat the person with dignity.
- Praise the person for what they can do.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Be sure the person has something to do.
- Keep your sense of humor intact.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings.
- Don't threaten abandonment.
- Reassure if the person shows fear.
- If possible, use physical contact — touching, hugs — to show things are ok.
- Know that fantasy may be a coping device.
- Use the person's name when speaking to them.
- Avoid memory questions to limit frustration.
- Approach the person from the front to avoid surprise or fear.
- Use repetition.
- Use statements instead of questions.
- Allow time for understanding and processing information.
- Make positive statements unless it's a safety issue.
- Use specifics like "chair" and "table" instead of "it" or "there."
- Break tasks into smaller parts.

CHOOSING A DEDICATED MEMORY SUPPORT COMMUNITY

As driving ceases and other losses of independence occur in the progression of the memory loss, it's time to explore the specialized memory support options offered in dedicated settings. In recent years, advances in programs and treatment have resulted in sophisticated residential programs that help residents live contentedly and engaged with their daily lives.

When you're looking for a new environment for your family member — whether it's at a full-service senior living community, a free-standing assisted living or skilled care community, or a specialized memory care and Alzheimer's community — keep these questions in mind:

Setting

- Is it comfortable and clean?
- Does it provide for safe wandering indoors and out?
- Are there colors or other cues to define areas?
- Is the overall lighting even?
- Are the bathrooms identifiable and safe?
- Do the furniture arrangements encourage interaction?
- Are there personal private places?
- Are there private places for the family to interact with the resident?
- Is the location convenient for you and your family?

Program

- Is it specifically designed for people with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia?
- Are there opportunities for nurturing?
- Are behaviors accommodated without the use of restraints?
- Is there a full daily schedule for residents?
- What's the philosophy of care?

People

- Who completes the initial assessment of your family member?
- How often are subsequent assessments done?
- What training does the staff receive?
- Are current residents active?



ASSISTED LIVING

The goal is independence — as much as possible. And when seniors receive assistance to accomplish the daily tasks like bathing, dressing and grooming, their sense of independence and individuality can grow.

HOW DOES ASSISTED LIVING HELP?

The services offered within assisted living communities vary, but typically you should expect your loved one will have the following:

- Safety and security
- Personal care and assistance — especially with the activities of daily living
- Housekeeping and laundry services
- Meals in a community setting
- Social activities with an overall wellness emphasis
- Transportation services for shopping and medical appointments
- Health services, as needed — including medication management

How do you know if your loved one needs assisted living?

Start with an honest appraisal of their competence with basic and ordinary activities, including bathing, dressing, toileting, getting in and out of bed, and feeding themselves. Have their health conditions worsened? Are they keeping up with bill paying, housecleaning, cooking, transportation and socializing? If not, it may be time to explore the area's assisted living options. When you do, use a checklist like the one provided here to organize your review.

ASSISTED LIVING (CONT.)

ASSISTED LIVING VISIT CHECKLIST

Community name: _____ Date of visit: _____

LOCATION

- Is it convenient for friend and family visits?
- How close is the nearest hospital or medical plaza?
- Is the neighborhood safe?
- What's the visiting schedule? Will you have privacy during your visits?
- Can you take your loved one off campus?
- What's covered in the basic fee, and what's extra?
- Can you talk to residents' family members to get their perspective on the available assistance and community?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Is it specifically designed for assisted living?
- Is the setting clean, well maintained and odor-free?
- Are the doors and rooms clearly labeled with words and/or pictures?
- Are there private areas provided for family interaction?
- Are areas well lit with plenty of natural light?
- Are outdoor areas provided for residents?
- Are the apartments private?
- Are handrails provided in hallways?
- Are grab bars provided in bathrooms?
- Is a 24/7 emergency response system available?

ASSISTED LIVING (CONT.)

ASSISTANCE

- Is the community licensed for assisted living?
- How is the staff trained?
- Are there staff background checks?
- What's the staff-to-resident ratio?
- Are there individualized, personal assessment plans, and are they updated regularly?
- Are family support and education available?
- Are enrichment activities scheduled daily to keep residents alert, stimulated and entertained?
- Does staff assist with and participate in activities?
- Is there an on-site health clinic?
- Does the community offer additional levels of living if medical needs develop?
- Do doctors visit regularly?
- Can residents visit their own doctors and dentists?





SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION

SKILLED NURSING

Long-term diagnoses call for long-term plans. When, for any reason and at any time, your loved one's condition requires a licensed nurse 24/7 for days, weeks or even months, skilled nursing may be the answer.

Anchor your search for skilled nursing for your loved one in a physician's evaluation. The professional assessment of medical and daily living needs will help you know what's needed next. If home care and/or outpatient care are inadequate to meet the demands presented by an acute illness, injury or post-op condition that doesn't require hospitalization, you're likely to discover skilled nursing is the right choice.

For an aging senior, the following health conditions often require long-term skilled nursing:

CARDIAC FAILURE

COPD (CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE)

CHF (CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE)

DIABETES

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

SEVERE OSTEOARTHRITIS

STROKE



SKILLED NURSING & REHABILITATION (CONT.)

REHABILITATION

Many don't know that rehabilitation is often offered within a skilled nursing setting, where staff, technology and services are ideally suited to delivering both long-term care and short-term skilled nursing — or “rehab.” When your loved one needs the right space for their body to heal and be its best — skilled rehab may be the answer.

Rehab is usually prescribed following an injury, surgery or illness that would heal faster or more thoroughly from new muscle memory, strength training, antibiotic IV therapy or other treatment. Ordinarily, rehab treatment can range from several days to weeks, and successfully concludes when all treatment goals are met and the resident is released to return home.

For aging seniors, rehab treatment may be appropriate for these conditions:

CARDIAC CARE

JOINT REPLACEMENT

ORTHOPEDICS

PAIN MANAGEMENT

NEUROLOGIC RECOVERY

STROKE RECOVERY

OTHER MAJOR ILLNESS, EVENT OR SURGERY

WOUND HEALING

RESPIRATORY CARE

SKILLED NURSING/REHAB VISIT CHECKLIST

Community name: _____ Date of visit: _____

LOCATION

- Is it convenient for friend and family visits?
- How close is the nearest hospital or medical plaza?
- Is the neighborhood safe?
- What's the visiting schedule? Will you have privacy during your visits?
- What's covered in the basic fee, and what's extra?
- Can you talk to residents' family members to get their perspective on the available assistance and community?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

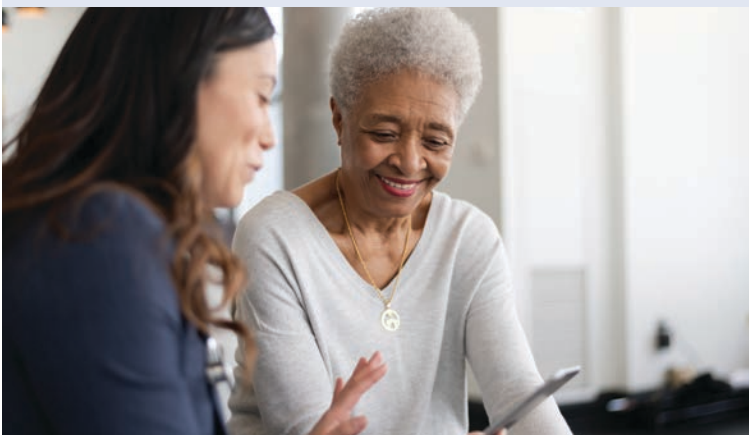
- Is it specifically designed for skilled nursing?
- Is the setting clean, well maintained and odor-free?
- Are the doors and rooms clearly labeled with words and/or pictures?
- Are there private areas provided for family interaction?
- Are areas well lit with plenty of natural light?
- Are outdoor areas provided for residents?
- Are the suites private?
- Are name tags worn by all staff members?
- Is there evidence of a warm, polite and respectful relationship between staff and residents?
- Are all common areas and resident rooms designed for wheelchair access?
- Do hallways have handrails and bathrooms have grab bars?
- Is a 24/7 emergency response system available?
- Are all exits clearly marked?

ASSISTANCE

- Is the skilled nursing community Medicare-certified?
- Is the skilled nursing community Medicaid-certified?
- Is a full-time registered nurse on duty in the community at all times?
- Is a full-time social worker on staff?
- Is there longevity among key staff?
- Can the on-staff doctor be reached 24/7?
- Are background checks performed on all staff members?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio?
- Are individualized, personal assessment plans updated regularly?
- Are family support and education available?
- Are enrichment activities scheduled daily to keep residents alert, stimulated and entertained?
- Do staff members assist with and participate in activities?
- Can residents visit their own doctors and dentists?

RESIDENCES

- Are personal belongings and furniture permitted?
- Is personal storage space offered to each resident?
- Are residences private or semiprivate?
- Do rooms include television, cable, phone and a recliner?
- Are there policies and procedures in place to protect residents' possessions?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

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AARP-Caregiving	aarp.org/family/caregiving
Alzheimer's Association	alz.org
American Parkinson Disease Association	apdaparkinson.org
Family Caregiver Alliance	caregiver.org
Health in Aging	healthinaging.org
Mayo Clinic	mayoclinic.org
Medicare	medicare.gov
National Alliance for Caregiving	caregiving.org
National Council on Aging	ncoa.org
National Multiple Sclerosis Society	nationalmssociety.org
National Osteoporosis Foundation	nof.org
National Stroke Association	stroke.org
A Senior's Guide to Good Nutrition	vrg.org/nutrition/seniors.htm
Social Security Administration	ssa.gov
The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care	theconsumervoice.org



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