



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR COMMUNITY TOUR

What to know, what to take, and what to ask

When it comes to choosing a senior living community, the interactions you have with the community are vitally important to your decision-making process. Often, the first in-person contact you'll have is a tour. It's a great opportunity to ask questions of many different people, observe the life of the community, sample the food, and get a feel for whether it's the right place for you. It only makes sense that you'll want to be prepared.




1. Prepare for your tour.

Compile a list of questions to take with you. (This article will give you many ideas.) Bring a notebook so you can jot down observations. Consider asking a family member or friend to accompany you on the tour to provide an extra set of eyes and ears. And having camera or cell phone handy to take pictures is a good idea as well.

2. Ask lots of questions.

Choosing a senior living community is a big decision, so questions are expected. The questions in the following list of topics will get you started. You'll surely have more of your own as you learn about each community, so don't hesitate to ask anything that comes to mind. Staff will want to help you make sure the community is a good fit for you.

 **Dining services.** If you will be using the community's dining services, the quality of food is paramount. Are multiple dining options available, or is there only one dining room? Can residents eat according to their own schedules, or is dining only available at certain times? Ask to view several months of menus. Is there variety? Eat a meal at the community. Is the food fresh and well prepared? Ask residents you meet how they like the food and what they think of the service. If you require a special diet, ask how that would be accommodated.

✓ **Floor plans.** Even if you think you know which floor plan you want, be sure to view all your options and tour actual residences before making up your mind. A plan that may seem too small or overly spacious on paper may feel different in person.

Also check that the residence you're considering includes features that are important to you. Is there plenty of natural light? Are kitchen appliances full-size? Does each residence have its own washer and dryer, or do residents share a common laundry room? Is there plenty of closet space? What about extra storage either within the residence or on-site? Is secure Wi-Fi provided? What about parking?

✓ **Services and amenities.** Find out what kinds of services and amenities are offered and included in your monthly fees. Are there plenty of activities and programs that would interest you? What about resident clubs? Are there frequent daytrips to areas of interest like museums or theater performances? Is transportation available for shopping and medical appointments? What is the community's approach to wellness? Is there a fitness center with group exercise classes? Is personal training available? What about conveniences like a salon, barbershop or spa? Are church services offered on-site or is transportation available to area churches and synagogues?



✔ **Health care.** Is there an on-site clinic for routine health monitoring, screenings and treatment of acute illnesses? How is it staffed and when? What additional levels of care are available on-site in case your needs someday change? Who determines whether and when an additional care level is needed? How are living arrangements handled if one member of a couple is independent while the other needs more care?

Ask to see the community's inspection reports, state survey or accreditation results and, if it offers health care, its CMS.gov report. Your local Area Agency on Aging can also help you find information about the community's performance. If you note any deficiencies, ask to speak with the director about the report.

✔ **Staff.** What training and credentials do staff members have? Is a background check required for all staff members? Ask about longevity and turnover. Low staff turnover can be a sign of a well-managed community, while high turnover can be stressful for residents who depend on staff to meet their daily needs. What staffing levels are maintained? Is it different in the evening or on weekends?

As you tour the community, make a point of speaking with some staff members. How do they interact with you? Are they proud of the community and the work they do? Is morale high?





✔ **Safety and security.** What types of security procedures, systems and technology are used? Is there a pull cord or similar system that a resident can use to call for help? Does a staff member respond to safety and security issues 24/7? Is there a system in place to regularly check on residents? Does the community have a generator for backup power?

✔ **Costs and contracts.** If you think the community may be a good fit for you, ask about costs, including any entrance fee, monthly fees and contract types.

Being prepared for your tour will help you make the most of the time you have, and ensure you're able to fully understand the community and its culture. Use this time to think about your current and future needs, and imagine how you want to live the next chapter of your life.

Freedom Village of Bradenton offers an exceptional senior lifestyle, and we're looking forward to meeting you and showing you around our community.



**Freedom Village
of Bradenton**