

Resources for Families

Care Planning



Should My Loved One Receive Home Care or Move into a Facility?

Seniors typically require more support as they age and there usually comes a time when their needs go beyond what their family is able to provide. At that point, it is necessary to decide where to find assistance to ensure that the aging person can continue to live their life to the fullest.

What are our options?

There are several options, including home care, assisted living, nursing homes, and skilled nursing facilities (SNFs).

Home care is professional customized caregiving provided to individuals in their homes or residential facilities. It can include a range of services, such as assistance with activities of daily living, meal preparation, housekeeping, or care for more advanced medical needs.

Assisted living facilities offer services, such as light personal care, medication management, housekeeping and meal preparation. Staff in these residences focus on group and individual activities to foster community and prevent isolation.

Continuing care retirement communities provide a tiered approach. Usually residents move into apartments designed for independent adults in good health. As needs change, they can move to on-site assisted living or nursing home facilities. A major benefit of continuing care retirement communities is that there does not have to be a disorienting move when health care needs increase.



Nursing homes can meet more advanced care needs. Services include 24-hour supervision and assistance with activities of daily living. Residents in these homes typically have chronic physical and/or mental health conditions.

SNFs usually have nurses or physicians on-site at all times. These residential facilities can offer rehabilitation services like occupational, physical, and speech therapy. While the term SNF is sometimes used interchangeably with nursing home since they both offer more advanced care, they do fall under different regulations.

There are a variety of factors to consider when selecting the best care options for your loved one.

Are Mobility Issues Impacting Safety?

If a senior's mobility is compromised, the family home may be unsuitable. Downsizing to an apartment in a senior's complex may reduce mobility challenges and relieve them of the strain of housekeeping tasks.

If staying home is preferred, it may be necessary to modify the house with ramps, railings, chairlifts, or other adaptive equipment.

Should My Loved One's Mental State Impact Our Decision?

The senior's mental state is an important consideration when making changes and it is imperative to have the right supports in place during transitions.

If someone is mentally strong and flexible, moving out of the family home into a new setting will be a significant adjustment but it probably won't be too overwhelming. Some may even find the change and opportunity to make new friends invigorating.



Others, however, may find the change distressing. This is especially true for those who suffer with dementia or advanced Alzheimer's. Some studies suggest that leaving the familiarity of the family home may actually accelerate the progression of dementia symptoms because familiar memory-triggers are lost.

When choosing what type of care is required for your loved one, it is necessary to assess their mental state and their ability to handle change. If it is necessary to move them to a facility for their own safety, be sure to have additional supports in place as they make the transition.

How Should I Choose a Care Facility?

Nursing homes, SNFs, and some assisted living facilities provide nursing care. If the senior has advanced nursing care needs, moving to one of these may be a good option. When considering which type of facility, it is important to review the physical facility, its reputation, and staffing ratios.

If you are looking at an assisted living facility, you should ask about the level of support provided since there is a wide range. Many residences provide personal care services, but not the same level of care as nursing homes and SNFs. You will also want to review the caregiver to resident ratios for both the day and overnight shifts.

For peace of mind and added support, some families choose to supplement care with private-paid services. A home care professional can offer the client customized services, including companionship, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, transportation, and Alzheimer's/dementia care.



How important is companionship?

Social interaction may be the most important factor to consider when choosing between home care and a facility. If the family and caregivers of the elderly person are able to have a strong presence, home care is often the best approach. Relatives can develop meaningful relationships with home care professionals to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the senior's health and needs.

Interactions with family, friends, neighbors, and pets have a powerful impact on health and well-being. Seniors who have strong, positive relationships with their family or other caregivers will benefit from staying at home. However, those who are isolated and have little contact with friends and relatives may benefit from social bonds they develop with a caregiver or in an assisted living facility or retirement community.

If there is a strong preference to remain at home and frequent social interactions are a challenge, then the family can arrange for social outings with the assistance of home care service providers.

What about the risk of infection?

While the majority of assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and SNFs exercise a high level of caution to prevent the spread of infections, it is well documented that hospitals and high-density dwellings with vulnerable people tend to be hotspots for infectious disease outbreaks.

It is important to review the reputation of the facilities you are considering. An on-site visit and discussion with the director of care are essential to establish an understanding of the institution's approach to infectious disease control.



Although staying home is safer, it is also important to ensure safeguards to keep the home clean. It is essential that home care providers have up-to-date training in, and rigorously practice infection prevention and control.

What are the cost considerations?

Since home care professionals are usually paid by the hour, the cost of home care is flexible and will be unique to each individual. If care is not intensive, this can be a low-cost option. If care needs are more complex, the cost will be higher. Home care companies work closely with families to ensure they are staying within budget, while also accommodating the family's schedule and unique needs. Since the care is one-on-one, a few hours can make a significant difference.

If assisted living seems like the right option for your loved one, verify what services are included and whether there are additional fees. It is also usually possible to pay for extra support. Some assisted living facilities accept Medicaid Plus or long-term care insurance.

Continuing care retirement communities entail significant fees, including a substantial upfront payment, and then monthly charges. Costs will increase as care needs increase.

It is important to understand the care your loved one requires and take into account any extra costs when preparing your budget. Often people underestimate the fees and the length of time the care will be required. Give this careful consideration and seek guidance if necessary. It will be important to verify what Medicare and Medicaid cover and whether your loved one has long-term care insurance.

It is best to make an informed decision based on cost estimates from both residences and home care providers. It may also be necessary to obtain assistance from a financial advisor who is able to assess your financial situation.



Whether your loved one chooses to stay at home or have personalized support in a facility, Qualicare is here to help. We know this decision is often overwhelming and confusing. We can help you explore your options and make the right decision for your family. Reach out and find out how we can assist you to ensure the highest standard of care.

T: 888.591.0017
qualicare.com

