



Friends of St. John the Caregiver

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From *A Catholic Guide to Caring for Your Aging Parent*
by Monica Dodds
Loyola Press

Checklist for Family Caregivers

Evaluating a Nursing Home

Name of facility

Address

Phone

Web site/E-mail

Contact name / Position

Date of visit / Day and time

Initial Questions

- Is Medicare accepted? Medicaid? Long-term care insurance? Private pay?
- What are the levels of care (independent, assisted living, nursing)?
- Does the facility have a religious affiliation? Weekly church services? A chaplain?
A Eucharistic minister?
- Are volunteers involved? In what capacity?
- How long has the facility been under the present ownership/management?
- Are the patient's rights posted?
- Is the facility licensed by the state?
- Can you get a copy of the most recent state licensing review? Have all deficiencies listed on the review been corrected?

Treatment of Residents

- Does the staff knock on the door before entering a patient's room?
- Is the door closed when a staff member is taking care of a patient's personal needs?
- Does the staff respond quickly to a resident's call button?
- How do the staff and residents interact?
- Does your tour guide greet residents and know their names?

Staff

- Are criminal history checks and drug tests done on all staff members?
- What are the staff positions (administrator, direct care providers, social worker, nutritionist)?
- How many RNs are on duty for each shift? LPNs? CNAs? Support staff?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio for each shift?
- Do the staff members wear nametags?

Care

- Does the facility develop a care plan for each resident? Who writes the care plan? Are the residents and their family involved? How often is the care plan reviewed?
- Is there a resident/family council? How often does it meet? What do they talk about?
- Are patients clean, dressed, and groomed?
- Are there planned activities? How many choices are there? Are they age appropriate?
- Is any therapy (physical, occupational, speech) available?
- Is there fresh water in the rooms?
- Does the food look and taste good?
- Are the mealtimes flexible? How many meals and which meals are included?
- Is room delivery for meals available if your loved one is sick?
- Are there choices for meals? Can special diets be accommodated? Are nutritious snacks provided?
Can a resident select a portion size?
- Is special care available for patients with special needs, such as dementia?
- Are there arrangements for care with a local hospital? Is preventive care (such as flu shots) provided?
- Is there a doctor who makes regular visits?
- Can a patient's current primary doctor continue to provide care?

Environment

- Is there a pleasant smell?
- Are accidents cleaned up promptly?
- Is the hallway clear for wheelchair and walker use?
- Is the room temperature appropriate, not too hot or too cold?
- Is the noise level in the halls, common rooms, and dining room comfortable?
- Is storage space available?
- Are there windows that let in natural light?
- Is there a dining room?
- Are there areas for visiting indoors? Outdoors?
- What is your overall impression? Is it institutional? Homelike?
- What is provided in the room (TV, telephone, cable, Internet connection)?
- Can residents bring in their own furniture and personal items?

Policies

- When are visiting hours?
- Who handles discharge planning? How is it handled?
- What is involved in the admissions process? Is there a waiting list?
- Is smoking allowed?
- How are room assignments made? Can they be changed?
- What happens if items are stolen from a patient's room?

Safety

- Are strangers prevented from entering without permission?
- Is the facility wheelchair accessible?
- Does it have well-lit halls?
- Are there marked exits?
- Are there handrails in the halls?
- Are there grab bars and call buttons in the bathrooms?
- Are there locks on doors and windows?
- Are fire systems, sprinklers, fire doors, and evacuation plans in place?
- Is there a generator if the power goes out?

For more free information, visit YourAgingParent.com, a program of the Friends of St. John the Caregiver.

To receive a free copy of "The Little Book of Caregiver Prayers," send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Friends of St. John the Caregiver, P.O. Box 320, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043.