

Sometimes you may need care
you just can't get at home.

Compare care.



How to find a nursing home that's right for you.

Compare care.

When You Need Nursing Home Care

When Mom was ready to leave the hospital, her doctor told us that she needed more care than we could provide at home. We weren't sure what to do next. At the hospital, Mom's discharge planner talked with us about nursing homes. She told us about Medicare's *Nursing Home Compare* at www.medicare.gov.

When we searched *Nursing Home Compare*, we were relieved to find so much information about nursing homes in one place. We needed to find which nursing homes in our area provided the best quality of care. We called several nursing homes to ask questions and arrange visits. After our visits, we were able to make the best decision.



What Is Nursing Home Care and Who Pays for It?

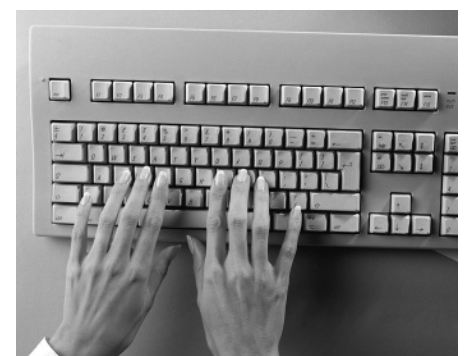
When people need more care than they can get at home or in the community, a nursing home may be the best choice. Nursing homes help residents with daily activities, like feeding, bathing, or dressing. They may also provide skilled medical care such as physical therapy or changing sterile dressings.

Nursing home care can be expensive and many types of health insurance don't cover it. People pay for nursing home stays out of pocket, with long-term care insurance, or through their state's Medicaid program. Medicare usually does not pay for nursing home care unless a person needs skilled medical care after certain hospital stays. Talk with your doctor, the hospital discharge planner, or the nursing home administrator for more information about paying for nursing home care.

Compare Care: Medicare's Information About Quality

Nursing Home Compare at www.medicare.gov is one tool that can help you make an informed decision. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, *Nursing Home Compare* can tell you how well local nursing homes care for their residents in several important areas (see the chart on the next page).

Nursing homes should encourage residents to stay active, doing as much as they can for themselves. Staying active can help residents feel better about themselves and lower their risk for other serious illnesses. Special equipment, like catheters and restraints, should only be used if a doctor says it is needed and not to make care easier for the staff.



Nursing Home Compare



www.medicare.gov

Learning About Nursing Home Quality

Nursing Home Compare gives information about these areas of care:

FOR LONG-TERM RESIDENTS

- Daily activities (feeding, bathing, dressing)
- Time spent in bed or in a chair
- Ability to move around room
- Physical restraints
- Control of bowels or bladder
- Catheter use
- Urinary tract infection (UTI)
- Moderate to severe pain
- Pressure sores
- Depression or anxiety

FOR SHORT-TERM RESIDENTS

- Confusion
- Moderate to severe pain during their first seven days in the nursing home
- Pressure sores

Getting Started With Medicare's Nursing Home Compare Web Site

Getting information about the quality of local nursing homes is easy. First, know what services you (or your loved one) will need.

Then:

1. Go to *www.medicare.gov*
2. Select *Nursing Home Compare*
3. Follow the step-by-step instructions on the Web site to find information about nursing homes in your area

Look at how the nursing homes perform for each area of care. When you call or visit nursing homes, use a checklist to help you learn more about their services. The local long-term care ombudsman assigned to the nursing home can also give you more information. Ask the nursing home for the ombudsman's name and telephone number, or look under "Helpful Contacts" on *Nursing Home Compare* at *www.medicare.gov*.

Sometimes, decisions about nursing home care must be made quickly and there may not be many nursing homes to choose from. Some nursing homes may not have space for new residents. Even when a person doesn't have many choices, families and friends can use the information on *Nursing Home Compare* to monitor their loved one's care and talk about questions or concerns with nursing home staff.

When You Call Or Visit A Nursing Home

Visiting a nursing home several times can help you make a decision. It is important to talk with residents of the nursing home and their family members. Use this short checklist to help you decide whether the care meets your needs. Medicare's *Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home at Nursing Home Compare* (under the Resources, Publications tab) offers an expanded checklist.

- Does the nursing home accept Medicare and Medicaid?
- Ask to see the nursing home's last annual state inspection report. Did the report find any problems? Ask how the problems were fixed.
- Does the nursing home have an active resident and/or family council?
- Use your five senses. Is the home clean and free of odors? Is it pleasant?
- Does the staff treat residents with respect?
- Is there information posted on how to reach the ombudsman?
- Do the residents have the same staff on a daily basis?
- Is there enough staff available to assist residents?
- Does the staff respond quickly to residents' calls for help?

To learn more about nursing home quality of care, visit:

www.medicare.gov

(select *Nursing Home Compare*)

or call:

1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)

TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048

