

# How to Choose a Memory Care Facility



## The Basics

- Is the memory facility able to accommodate people at all levels of dementia, or only at specific levels?
- Why might a resident be asked to leave the facility?
- Who assesses residents' health and cognitive functioning? How often is that assessment repeated?
- Does each resident have a formal, written plan of care?
- Does the facility help with all [activities of daily living](#) (ADLs), including bathing, toileting, and eating?
- [How Do You Find a Memory Care Facility?](#)
- [What Should You Look for in a Memory Care Facility?](#)

## Layout

- If the facility is part of an [assisted living facility](#) or continuing care retirement community, is the memory care section separate from other areas?
- Is the memory care area all on one level?
- Are the residents' rooms private or shared?
- Is the facility laid out with circular hallways so that residents aren't frustrated by culs-de-sac?
- Is there an enclosed, secure outdoor area with walking paths?

## Safety

- Does the facility feature even, good lighting in hallways and common areas?
- Does the facility feature non-slip floor surfaces in all rooms, including bathrooms?
- Is the interior and exterior of the facility secure?
- What methods are used to keep tabs on residents and make sure they don't wander out of the building or off the grounds?

## Orientation and Discomfort

- Are doors and rooms labeled clearly, both with words and pictures, to help residents orient themselves?

- Do residents have “memory boxes” outside their rooms to help them identify the right room and to help staff members get to know them better?
- Are the colors used throughout the facility bold and unpatterned?
- Does the facility feature good natural or faux-natural lighting in residents’ rooms and common areas?
- Is the facility generally pleasant, clean, and peaceful?

**Staff members:**

- What kind of dementia-specific training do staff members have?
- Do staff members seem to know each resident’s name, personality, and background?
- Do staff members seem kind and attentive to residents’ needs?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio? (The ratio should be at least 1 to 7, especially for later-stage dementia.)
- Is there an RN, LVN, or CNA on staff?
- How do the staff members deal with difficult behaviors, like aggression, mood swings, and sundown syndrome?
- What is the facility’s policy on the use of restraints — both physical and chemical?

**Food and activities:**

- Do residents seem to enjoy the food?
- How does the facility encourage residents uninterested in food to eat, or discourage overeaters to eat less?
- Will the facility cater to special nutritional needs or requests?
- Does the facility offer spiritual or religious services that your loved one would enjoy attending?
- Does the facility allow pets? Does the facility have any of its own pets?
- What activities are offered to residents? Do they seem like they would engage your loved one?
- Does the facility offer regular exercise sessions for residents who are physically able to participate?
- What resources are available to engage residents’ long-term memories? (Some facilities offer fake kitchens where former bakers can feel at home, or stations where residents can fold laundry or do other familiar tasks that might be comforting.)