

Seniors Guide

Your Comprehensive Guide To All Things Senior



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Housing Options Terms

There are many options in senior living facilities that range from the very independent of senior apartments to the acute care provided by a nursing home. Understanding the following terms will help you better grasp the different levels of senior citizen housing. When visiting senior care communities, it is important to know what to look for and what to ask. Refer to our what to ask when visiting worksheet to help guide you through the process.

Maintenance Free Homes

This category includes homes, condominiums, townhomes, active retirement communities and manufactured homes typically sold as deeded real estate for independent living. Often maintenance free homes are referred to as villas, patio homes, carriage homes or townhomes. Retirees and pre-retirees are interested in these options to enjoy their free time with travel and recreation rather than on housing and maintenance.

Apartments for All Ages

These apartments are for seniors that are totally independent. These communities do not have age restrictions and are open to the general public. Many of these communities have amenities and luxuries that seniors enjoy such as swimming pools, clubhouses and fitness centers. Some offer programs/amenities that are directly geared for their senior residents such as transportation, planned activities and trips. Meal services, emergency response and medical services are not typically included.

Independent Living

Independent residential communities are for seniors desiring a leisurely, hassle-free lifestyle. Choices include active retirement communities, apartments, condos, or garden homes offering some extra services and features that many retirees would especially enjoy or find helpful. Beyond home maintenance, some services available might include social programs, transportation services, organized outings, shopping trips and sometimes limited medical services. Features might include emergency pull cords within the home, first floor access or elevators that are handicap friendly. Community features may also include meals, housekeeping and laundry. Some independent living communities partner with outside senior service providers such as home health care agencies to increase the senior services available on their campus.

Assisted Living

Assisted Living communities are for persons who need help with daily living activities but do not require nursing home care. Typically they provide help with meals, bathing, dressing, housekeeping, and other needs. Services are either included in the rent or provided at an extra charge.

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC)

Many senior communities offer more than one level of care. There are some, however, that offer a comprehensive continuum of care. You may enter at any care level but often seniors move to one of these communities to enjoy an independent, active lifestyle. Should the need arise for assistance with living, memory supportive care, rehabilitation or even skilled nursing on a temporary or long-term basis; those needs can be met within the same community. Choosing a community that offers a continuum of care can be a good choice for couples whose needs may vary.

Respite Care

Respite Care communities offer temporary or short term care solutions. This service is intended to give caregivers or adult children a well deserved break from their daily responsibilities of caring for an older adult. The length of a respite stay can vary from 2 days up to more than a full month.

Memory Care (Alzheimer's & Dementia)

Includes facilities which offer specialized programs for residents suffering from Alzheimer's disease, Dementia or other forms of memory loss. These programs can also be offered by Assisted Living and Nursing facilities.

Nursing Care

Nursing homes are for seniors in need of 24-hour nursing care. They provide many of the same care options offered in other senior retirement communities such as room and board, personal care, protection, supervision and other types of therapy. Typically nursing care falls into three levels of care:

- Basic Care - Required to maintain a person's activity of daily living
- Skilled Care - Requires the services of a registered nurse for treatment and procedures
- Sub-Acute Care - Requires comprehensive in-patient care for someone who has experienced an acute illness or injury.

Rehabilitation Care Facilities

that offer rehabilitative care services on a short-term or long-term basis.

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