

# Choosing a Long Term Care Facility: Part 3

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Decisions about alternative living arrangements are always very difficult to make. When an individual's declining health requires the 24-hour care of a nursing home, many emotional and financial issues arise. Past columns addressed the financial realities of nursing home admissions and availability of accommodations. This column provides a guide of 'what to look for' when previewing different long-term care facilities.

Discussions with the elderly person's attending physician and other people who had personal experiences with nursing homes can help you to learn about facilities in your chosen area. Elder Life Management's experienced consultants have been very successful in guiding

caregivers through the difficult nursing facility placement process.

The "Facility Data Telephone Survey" from the previous column is helpful in gathering information when calling facilities. This form is available on our website: [www.elderlifemanagement.org](http://www.elderlifemanagement.org) or by contacting our office. All of the listed criteria are important, however, for an individual needing immediate admission, particular attention is needed in regard to the 'waiting list' questions.

Once information has been obtained through the telephone survey, facilities can be chosen for previewing. Knowing what to look for during a tour is important and listed below are observational suggestions. After each nursing facility visit, you may want to jot down your findings.

## **WALK THROUGH REVIEW**

### **General**

Clean, orderly and odor free  
Noise level acceptable  
Rooms at comfortable temperature  
Appropriate lighting  
Furniture comfortable  
Outdoor area for sunshine and fresh air  
Participation seen in organized activity program  
Rehabilitation & Therapy Room being used  
Residents appear relaxed and content

### **Residents' Rooms**

Fresh drinking water within reach  
Lounge where residents can chat, play games, watch TV away from individual room

### **Attitude**

Facility's atmosphere is warm, pleasant, cheerful  
Administrator and staff courteous, helpful and professional  
Residents treated with dignity and respect  
Staff knocks on door before entering resident's room  
A sense of fellowship among residents.