

# Checklist of questions to consider when touring a long-term care facility

[www.nursinghomeratings.ca](http://www.nursinghomeratings.ca)

## RESIDENTS

1. Do residents appear happy?
2. Are residents clean?
3. Are residents dressed (residents should be in day clothes, as opposed to pajamas)?
4. Are residents alert?
5. Are residents dressed in attire appropriate to the season/temperature?
6. Are residents well groomed (shaven, clean nails, clean clothes)?
7. Speak to residents and ask them their opinions about the home.
8. Are most residents out of their rooms?
9. Are residents lining the hallways, or participating in activities?
10. Are residents' glasses clean?

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

11. What are the policies and procedures for communicating changes in a resident's condition to family members/substitute decision makers?
12. Does the home have visiting hours that suit your needs?
13. How do family members, or substitute decisions makers, participate in developing the Care Plan.
14. How often are residents' teeth brushed?
15. How often are residents bathed?
16. Can a resident choose between a bath or shower?
17. Who is responsible for labeling personal clothes and belongings?
18. If the facility labels personal belongings, what is the process to have the items labeled?
19. How often are personal clothes laundered?
20. Will the nursing home accommodate your loved one if they like to sleep in or go to bed late?

21. How does staff communicate with residents who do not speak English?
22. How does staff communicate with residents who are cognitively impaired?
23. How does staff ask non-English speaking or cognitively impaired residents if they are in pain?
24. Is there a police reference check for each member of staff?
25. Is there a police reference check for each volunteer?
26. What is the home's fall prevention program?
27. What is the home's toileting program?
28. How often will the attending physician see the resident?
29. Will the resident be seen by the physician regularly, or only if there has been a change in the resident's condition?
30. Can a resident keep their own physician?
31. What are the policies and procedures for ensuring that personal clothes and belongings are not lost or stolen?
32. What happens if residents' personal belongings or clothes are lost or stolen?
33. Do family members or residents have access to a washer and dryer? If so, is there a fee?
34. If a personal belonging breaks (i.e., personal chair) who is responsible for the repair?
35. Is cable available in each resident's room?
36. Is each resident able to have a personal telephone?
37. Who is responsible for cleaning wheelchairs and walkers?
38. How often are wheelchairs and walkers cleaned?
39. Are family members allowed to bring pets to visit residents?
40. Does the home have a volunteer program?
41. How many people volunteer at the home?
42. What are the roles and duties of volunteers?
43. What are the policies and procedures for reporting abuse or neglect?

44. What does an abuse investigation entail?
45. What are the policies and procedures for filing a complaint?
46. What is the home's restraint policy?
47. Is the home a restraint-free residence?
48. What are the policies and procedures for handling a resident who is harmful to him/herself or other residents?
49. What is the frequency of Care Conferences?
50. How are family members, or Substitute Decision Makers, involved in Care Conferences?
51. Can the resident use naturopathic medicine?
52. What are the policies and procedures for taking a resident out for a day or vacation?
53. Ask to read a copy of Resident Council Minutes.
54. Ask to read a copy of Family Council Minutes.
55. Is there a Tuck Shop?
56. If there is a Tuck Shop, does it have items that would satisfy your loved one?
57. What are the policies and procedures for an outbreak?
58. Does the home arrange for transportation to appointments?
59. Is there a fee for transportation to appointments?
60. Who escorts residents to appointments?

#### ACTIVITIES

61. Ask for a copy of the Social Calendar.
62. Ask for a copy of the Activity Calendar
63. Are there activities/social events that would satisfy your loved one?
64. Are there activities/social events on the weekends?

65. Are there activities/social events during the evenings?
66. Are there activities/social events on holidays?
67. Are there outdoor activities?
68. Are there activities for bedridden residents?
69. Can family members participate in activities?
70. Are there activities that take place out of the facility?
71. How do staff encourage residents to participate in activities?
72. Does the staff ensure that activities are customized to residents' interests?
73. If your loved one participates in an outing, is there an additional charge?
74. If your loved one participates in an outing, what is the method of transportation?
75. Can family members participate in outings?
76. If family members participate in activities or outings, is there a fee?

#### STAFF

77. What is the staff-to-resident ratio (CCA-to-resident and Registered Nurse-to-resident) for the day shift?
78. What are the staffing ratios for the evening shift?
79. What are the staffing ratios for night shift?
80. Does staff appear friendly and approachable?
81. Does staff treat residents with respect and dignity?
82. Does staff address the residents by name?
83. Does staff wear name tags?
84. Does staff knock on resident doors and wait for a response before entering?
85. Does the home have a medical team that includes a cardiologist?
  - a. Dentist?
  - b. Ophthalmologist?
  - c. Podiatrist?

86. If the facility does arrange for dentist visits, how often does the dentist visit the home and what is the fee?
87. Has there been a turnover of CCAs?
- a. Registered staff?
  - b. Management?
88. How many staff members will be responsible for caring for your loved one?
89. Does the home rotate staff members or try to keep the same staff members caring for the same residents?
90. Is the social worker available to counsel and assist residents?

#### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

91. Does the home have a restorative care program?
92. Does the restorative care program address both physical and cognitive functioning?
93. Does the home have a palliative care program?
94. If so, does the home have an area for family members to spend the night?
95. Is physiotherapy available onsite?
96. What services are included in the regular monthly fees?
97. Does the facility provide speech and language therapy?
98. Does the home provide religious programming?
99. How often do clergy visit the home?
100. Is there a hairdresser on-site?

#### SAFETY AND SECURITY

101. Are all doors leading to stairways or exits closed and locked?
102. Does the home have a secure front door?
103. Does the home have a generator in the event of a power failure?
104. Is there an emergency evacuation plan in place?

105. How often does the home practice a mock evacuation?

## FOOD

106. Ask for a copy of the menu.

107. Would the menu appeal to your loved one?

108. Does the home offer choices for each meal?

109. Is the menu posted for all residents to see?

110. Does the food look appealing?

111. Can a family member have a meal with their loved one? If so, is there a fee?

112. Who monitors meal times?

113. If your loved one likes to sleep in, does staff still offer breakfast to the resident?

114. Are different food consistencies available?

115. Are other food choices available if the resident dislikes both alternatives?

116. Does the menu suit your loved one's cultural or religious regulations?

117. Are you pleased with the appearance of the dining room?

118. How long does it take staff to escort all residents to the dining room?

119. How long do residents wait in the dining room before receiving their meal?

120. If a resident is away from the facility during mealtime, will the meal be provided to the resident upon return?

121. Are snacks provided to residents upon request?

## ENVIRONMENT

122. Is the home clean?

123. Is the home well maintained?

124. Is the noise level acceptable?

125. Are residents' beds firm?
126. Is there a comfortable easy chair for every resident bedside?
127. Does every resident bed have a bedside table?
128. If there is more than one bed in a room, are they separated with a privacy curtain?
129. Are grab bars located beside toilets, baths, and showers?
130. Does the head of a bed elevate?
131. Is there a call bell located beside the bed, toilet, bath, and shower?
132. Does the home have air conditioning?
133. If the home is not air conditioned, what are the policies and procedures for periods of extreme heat?
134. Are mobility devices (i.e., walker, wheelchair, cane) available to residents on an as needed or short-term basis?
135. Are the linens clean and in good repair?
136. How often are rooms cleaned?
137. What does a private room look like?
138. What does a semi-private room look like?
139. What does a basic (ward) room look like?
140. Is there a secure unit for wandering residents?
141. Are hallways clean and well maintained?
142. Are stairwells clean and well maintained?

#### INSPECTIONS AND ACCREDITATION

143. Ask to read the Ministry and Public Health Inspection reports.
144. How many violations are listed on the report?
145. Were any of the violations reissued or repeated from previous reports?
146. Have all violations been corrected? If not, why?

147. What is being done to correct violations?

148. Is the home accredited?

149. If the home is not accredited, why did they choose not to participate in accreditation?

#### FINANCES

150. What is the cost of a private room?

151. What is the cost of a semi-private room?

152. What is the cost of a basic (ward) room?

153. Ask for a list of what is covered in the regular monthly fees.

154. What additional charges can be expected?

155. Does the home have a trust account for residents?

If you are serious about a home, it is a good idea to arrange a second visit at a time of day outside of normal tour times to ensure that home procedures match your initial impressions and expectations.