

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

Choosing Assisted Living

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200827

Dear Savvy Senior,

A friend of mine was telling me recently about an article she read in the USA Today about assisted living facilities and mistakes that have been made with people living there. My brother and I are thinking about an assisted living center for Mom - she's 80 and is starting to need some help. We are planning to visit some local centers and were wondering if you could tell what assisted living provides, what kind of mistakes are commonly made and give us some tips to help us choose a facility.

Need Assistance

Dear Need,

The assisted living industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the past decade. Currently, there are nearly one million residents living in 33,000 assisted living facilities across the country. While there's no standard blueprint for how assisted living facilities are constructed, they typically provide help with daily living activities like personal care, housekeeping, laundry, meals, social activities, transportation and medication management.

Savvy Facts: The national average cost for assisted living is around \$2,400 per month. Medicare does not cover assisted living.

Medication Mistakes

Assisted living facilities across America provide quality care for the most part, but bad things can sometimes happen. The problems that most commonly occur in assisted living facilities is giving medication to the wrong patient.

Shopping Assistance

When it comes to choosing a quality assisted living facility, many people make uninformed decisions. After you have determined the kind of services you need, here are a few tips to help you choose:

Ask to see their licensing and certification reports. Facilities are required to make these documents available upon request. The minor problems will not be listed but these reports will document patterns of neglect, mistakes in medication and other deficiencies.

Read the residential agreement or contract carefully. Many facilities charge extra for laundry service, haircuts, or giving medication or products for incontinence. The contract should spell out all these extra fees.

Ask about resident-to-staff ratio. One staff for 10 residents may be too low a ratio for residents who require lots of care. However, if residents are more independent, a 1-15 ratio may be just fine. Also, ask about staff turnover rate. If the rate is high, ask why.

Check out the daily activities schedule. Is there a wide range of interesting activities? Can residents of various abilities and mobility participate?

Look at the menus. Mealtimes are often the highlight for many residents, so eat a meal at the facility to see if the selection is varied, nutritious and tasty. Also, find out if mealtimes are set or if residents can choose when to eat.

Make an unannounced visit. Stop in during the morning and evening, when residents need help with bathing, hygiene, medication and meals. This is when assisted living facilities are at their busiest.

Other Considerations

Other factors to weigh in your decision should include room size or living space, proximity to where you live, safe and easy-to-navigate grounds, alarm system to notify the staff if your family member has wandered off, and whether the facility can accommodate your mom if she should become disabled.

Savvy Resources

The National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL): This provides free consumer information and brochures on planning, preparing, and paying for long-term care. Call 1-800-321-0343 or visit www.ncal.org.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman: Every state offers ombudsman programs that can help you locate a good long-term care facility or file complaints about poor care. For assistance, contact your local ombudsman program or area aging agency. To get the local phone number call 1-800-677-1116 or visit www.ltombudsman.org.