



Assisted Living[®] Locators

Your local senior living advisor

Home Care and Home Health Care

People often think home health and home care are the same thing. The terms sound similar and both types of care are delivered in the home. But there are important differences between home care and home health care.

Home care is non-medical care which helps with daily activities, allowing people to stay safe at home. It is often used by older adults (aging in place), those with chronic illnesses, those with disabilities and people recovering from surgery. Home care is also sometimes called personal care or companion care. Home care services may include:

- Personal care, such as help with bathing, washing your hair, or getting dressed
- Medication reminders
- House cleaning and other chores
- Transportation
- Meal preparation
- Companionship

Home Health Care is short-term, physician-directed care designed to help a patient prevent or recover from an illness, injury, or hospital stay. Home health care services may include:

- Short-term nursing services
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech language pathology
- Medical social work
- Home health aide services

Independent Living

Independent living communities are age-restricted communities designed specifically to meet the needs of seniors who no longer want to deal with the challenges of home ownership, yardwork, laundry and cleaning around the house, but who don't need assistance with performing Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). From senior-friendly events to building design, everything revolves around providing a better place for seniors to live.

Independent living may offer the right amount of support for a senior who doesn't need help with ADLs but may benefit from convenient services, senior-friendly surroundings, and increased social opportunities. In greater Nashville, most independent communities are part of larger communities that include assisted living and memory care.

More and more seniors around the country are choosing to live in independent living facilities. Whether they are tired of all the home upkeep or want to find more companionship, these communities provide a great option. They can also be a particularly good choice for those wanting to travel without worrying about maintaining their home year-round.

Depending on the community, independent living can include:

- Housekeeping
- Dining /meal preparation (typically 1 meal per day)
- Social & recreational activities
- Transportation
- Varying amenities

Assisted Living

Within the senior living spectrum, facilities run from those which primarily cater to people who are independent or have minimal needs to those who have severe limitations requiring a high degree of hands-on care services. What binds them all are the community-based basic services provided in an apartment setting. Assisted living communities are like hotels with caregivers on site.

Assisted Living communities are an excellent option for seniors who may require more day-to-day assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) but wish to remain independent for as long as possible. With assisted living, your loved one will receive support with daily living and basic care while living in his or her own apartment, all within a larger community of seniors. In the Nashville/Middle Tennessee area, assisted living communities come in many different sizes – some very large and others small, more intimate communities – with a wide variety of different amenities and services. What distinguishes a property as an assisted living rather than an independent living or 55+ community is that it is regulated by the State of Tennessee and has employee caregivers on site.

Services provided by assisted living communities include:

- Up to three meals a day, often plus snacks
- Assistance with personal needs such as bathing, dressing, incontinence care, feeding, transferring in and out of bed and chairs, and ambulation (walking)
- Help with medication
- Housekeeping and laundry
- Transportation
- 24-hour on-site care supervision
- Social/recreational activities

Many assisted living communities in greater Nashville have nurses on-site during regular business hours but few have nursing 24/hours a day. None of them employ doctors, but most have affiliations with visiting doctors and home health agencies who can provide their medical and therapy services in a resident's apartment, or in a dedicated space in the community set up for medical services.

The cost of assisted living in the Nashville metro area varies depending on many such as location, amenities, size of apartment and care needs. Typically, a resident will pay a fee for "room and board" and a separate fee for his or her individual care level. Room and board covers rent, meals, and all of the amenities provided by a community (activities, laundry, transportation, etc.). Care is a separate charge that varies from resident to resident depending on need. One resident may only require medication management, while another might have more extensive care needs for things such as incontinence or transferring in and out of a wheelchair.

Memory Care

Memory care is senior living in a smaller community setting that provides intensive, specialized care for people with cognitive issues including Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other types of memory problems. Memory care is provided in a secured environment by specially trained staff in a shared or private room.

Memory Care typically includes:

- 24-Hour supervised care by skilled staff specially trained to assist those with dementia or impaired cognitive abilities
- A secured environment
- Three meals a day and frequent snacks
- Medical monitoring and medication management
- An environment which is easy for residents with dementia to navigate
- Assistance with bathing, dressing, toileting, and grooming
- Activities geared toward maintaining cognitive abilities

Many assisted living communities in greater Nashville have memory care as part of a full continuum of care. Other memory care providers are stand alone communities.

Nursing Homes

Many people think that all senior living options are nursing homes. Actually, nursing homes are for people that require a higher degree of medical attention than is typically available in assisted living. Additionally, when people speak about nursing homes, they are often referring to two different kinds of facilities:

- Skilled nursing facilities and rehabilitation hospitals provide short-term comprehensive inpatient care and rehabilitation for those recovering from acute medical issues such as stroke, heart attack, and respiratory issues and those who are recovering after surgery such as joint replacements or cancer surgery. They have specialized staff such as speech-language pathologists, rehabilitation specialists, and audiologists who are not typically staffed in a nursing home. Following a short skilled nursing rehabilitation stay, a patient assessment will be conducted to determine if the patient is able to return home or should move to a more structured environment, like assisted living.
- A nursing home, on the other hand, provides permanent custodial care of elderly or disabled people and is more in line with the traditional idea of a nursing home. These locations offer 24-hour care with certified health professionals, room and board, and assistance with non-medical, everyday living tasks such as bathing, grooming, bathroom use, medication monitoring, and more. Many nursing homes also have special wings for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.

Some of the confusion arises because many nursing homes with a long-term custodial mission also provide skilled nursing facility services. The key difference between skilled nursing facilities and nursing homes is the required medical attention and the length of stay. The Nashville metro area includes a few rehabilitation hospitals, several skilled nursing facilities, and many traditional nursing homes.