

Once you've narrowed your list of prospective centers to three options, make an appointment with each to tour the centers.

To help you make the best choice, consider the following questions:

## **Accommodations and Experience**

- Is the center conveniently located for frequent visits from family and friends?
- Is the atmosphere welcoming and attractive?
- Is the environment safe and secure?
- Ask to visit a typical room. Does the living space suit your or your loved one's needs?
- How are private items stored or secured?
- How are roommates selected? How does the center accommodate differences?
- What is the policy for decorating rooms with personal items?
- What is the policy for residents having a private telephone?
- Do residents and visitors seem satisfied? What is the center's reputation?

## **Staff**

- What care providers are on staff? What are their qualifications?
- Are medical professionals (e.g., dentists, podiatrists, optometrists) available?
- Do caregivers show respect and a positive attitude toward residents and others?
- What is the center's staff retention rate? Care providers who are familiar with residents' routines and preferences are likely to provide more responsive care.
- Is there an active volunteer program?

## **Services**

- What services are offered?
- Are residents and families encouraged to participate in developing care plans?
- How are medications administered?
- What therapy programs are available (e.g. physical, occupational, infusion)?
- Does the center have an arrangement with a nearby hospital?
- Will a bed be held during hospitalization?

## **Activities**

- Look over the activity calendar and ask about the programs.
- How are residents encouraged to participate?
- Are religious services held on-site? What individualized arrangements can be made for residents to worship?
- What off-site activities are available?

## **Infection Prevention**

- What are your policies and procedures around infection prevention and control?
- During an infection outbreak, how do you communicate with families and residents?
- What are your practices for vaccinations and testing?
- If my loved one needs to be in quarantine due to infection, how do you prevent them from social isolation?
- Do you have technologies and strategies in place to ensure that I can still connect with my loved one if I am not allowed to visit in person? If so, what?

## **Dining**

- Observe mealtime at the center. Ask to have the dining procedures explained to you.
- Can residents choose mealtimes?
- What if a resident is unable to eat in the dining room?
- What is the policy on special menu requests? Are snacks provided? If so, when?
- Are private dining areas available when family and friends visit?
- How does the center accommodate eating preferences?
- If residents are hungry at night, do they have to wait until morning?
- Can visitors join residents at meals?

## **Ratings and Satisfaction**

- The federal government rates Skilled Nursing Care centers on a five-star system. Ask center personnel to explain the center's current rating.
- The state health department inspects every center annually. The results are public information. Ask to see the latest state survey report results.
- Does the center have a customer satisfaction survey program?

## **Resident Rights**

- What are the resident's rights, and where are they posted in the center?
- What is the procedure if there is a complaint or concern about care or services?
- To whom should one address concerns?
- What is the policy on use of physical restraints?
- Does the center have a resident council?
- Does the center have a family council?
- How often can relatives and friends visit?
- Can residents leave the premises to visit friends and relatives?
- How is mail handled?
- How much privacy do residents have?
- Can they be alone if they want to? Can they visit in private with relatives and friends or make private phone calls?
- Are residents' personal matters and possessions kept private?