



10 Important Questions to Ask a Senior Living Residence

Whether you're searching for [assisted living](#), [all-inclusive assisted living](#), or [independent living](#), asking the right questions is extremely important.

Finding the right community that will feel like home for years to come is a centrally important goal, and these are 10 key questions that you should be asking. There are many different types of communities available, and this guide will help you compare different senior living options to find the best fit.

1. How much does senior living cost?

For many seniors and their families, this is the first and most important question that can be asked. As seniors live longer lives, it's increasingly important to budget accordingly.

When talking about finances, it's not just about the monthly base rent. You should ask potential communities:

- Is the organization for-profit or non-profit, and how does this affect pricing on key services?
- Do you take Medicaid?
- How much do additional services cost?
- Is there a monthly cap on total costs if a series of support services are needed?
- Is the deposit or community fee refundable?
- How much does rent increase each year, and when will these increases be announced?

2. What services are included in the monthly rent?

Some communities include basic utilities in the monthly rent, but not phone service and cable, as an example. A community might have an assisted living a la carte option and an [all-inclusive assisted living option](#). The former will charge for additional services as they're needed, and the latter will have a single, all-in cost each month.

Find out if weekly housekeeping services are available, how many meals per day are included, and if local transportation is available.

3. What types of amenities are available in each apartment?

Amenities vary drastically from one senior living community to the next, so it's important to understand what's available at each residence you tour. Specifically, you might ask:

- Is there air conditioning?
- What are the room sizes?
- Are different floor plans available?
- Are bathrooms private, and do they have emergency call systems?
- Does the community have a library, wellness center, beauty shop, and other similar amenities?

This short list is hardly exhaustive, so don't hesitate to add your own specific questions to the list. Never assume that a particular amenity is available, either.

4. What types of meals are served, and do residents have a choice?

Learn about how dietary restrictions are handled, the types of food being served each day, whether residents can choose from different entrees, and other food-related concerns. You might even ask if resident requests are considered when new menus are created. Don't forget to ask for a sample [menu](#), too! Seeing an example of what a week's worth of meals might look like is very helpful.

5. How social is the community, and are there regularly scheduled events?

Some seniors crave a social community where they can make new friends and participate in events. Others are completely satisfied without these things. As you ask this question, it's important to take the future resident's desires into consideration. You should also ask:

- How many activities are scheduled each week?
- Is there a mix of events at home and outings in the community?
- Are there fees for activities and outings?
- Is transportation free?
- Can a loved one access the event calendar online?

6. What can you tell me about resident-to-staff ratios, employee turnover, and other topics related to staffing?

Resident-to-caregiver ratios depend on the level of assistance residents need daily.

In regards to turnover, it's very common to have a core team of staff members. However, turnover within the senior health industry does tend to happen.

Additional questions that can help you compare senior living options include:

- Do you have 24-hour awake staff?
- How are care needs assessed, and how often are they revisited?

- Do residents see the same staff and caregivers every day?

7. Which hospital is used in the event of an emergency?

Emergencies happen, and it's a good idea to ask which area hospitals are used.

Hospital selection is often based on location and type of injury; the responding paramedics ultimately have control over which hospital is used in an emergency.

8. What safety precautions exist?

While many senior living apartments do come equipped with safety measures such as emergency call cord systems, the level of security and safety varies amongst facilities.

These are some of the most pressing safety-related issues that should be covered:

- Is the facility secured?
- How often do staff check in with residents at their apartments?
- How are mobility issues handled, both in the apartment and elsewhere within the facility?
- What is the policy regarding a resident leaving the grounds?

You may have more specific questions to add to this short list, so don't forget to ask them. Safety is incredibly important, and you should feel completely comfortable with a community's approach.

9. What is the neighborhood like?

You'll surely want to know about the safety of the neighborhood, but other questions are important, too. Seniors might enjoy having shops, restaurants, and parks [nearby](#). In an assisted living environment, being able to enjoy the neighborhood with visiting loved ones is a memorable way to spend quality time together. Additionally, you can ask about proximity to medical offices, pharmacies, and other facilities. For some residents, easily available public transportation is a hugely important part of retaining independence and happiness.

10. Do you have apartments available now?

Some communities have long waiting lists for their assisted and independent living apartments. It's important to determine whether the community's availability suits your desired timeframe.

Additional questions and concerns to address

The questions above represent 10 of the most important pieces of information you need when comparing assisted and independent living communities. Still, you should feel empowered to ask about additional factors that are crucial to you or your loved one's happiness and contentment.