

Families have so many choices to make when the search for senior housing options arises. With so many senior housing options available, it's easy to feel confused and overwhelmed by all the different kinds of communities. It's important to learn the differences between the many elder care solutions that are out there so you can make the right choice for your family.

As you begin your search, use this handy guide to learn more about the different types of senior housing options available.

Independent Living Communities

Senior independent living communities cater to seniors who are very independent with few medical problems. Residents live in fully equipped private apartments.

A variety of apartment sizes are available from studios to large two bedrooms. Fine dining services are offered with custom-designed meal packages. Often, residents can choose to pay for a specified number of meals per day. Frequently, there are numerous social outings and events to choose from for entertainment.

- a. Also Known As: Retirement Communities; Congregate Care; Retirement Living
- b. Payment Sources: Mostly private pay; some government funded through Section 202
- c. Price Range: \$1000-\$3000 per month

Assisted Living

Assisted Living communities are designed for seniors who are no longer able to live on their own safely but do not require the high level of care provided in a nursing home. Assistance with medications, activities of daily living, meals and housekeeping are routinely provided. Three meals per day are provided in a central dining room. Residents live in private apartments which frequently have a limited kitchen area. Staff is available 24 hours per day for additional safety. Most assisted living communities provide licensed

nursing services. The hours vary greatly, so be sure to ask when you visit. Social activities and scheduled transportation are also available in most communities. A special unit for Alzheimer's residents is available in some, but not all communities.

- a. Also Known As: Assisted Care Community
- b. Payment Sources: Mostly private pay; some take Medicaid
- c. Price Range: \$2000 to \$4000 per month depending on the size of apartment and level of assistance required; Alzheimer's care ranges from \$2800 to \$4500 for a shared suite

Nursing Homes

Nursing homes provide around-the-clock skilled nursing care for the frail elderly who require a high level of medical care and assistance. Twenty-four hour skilled nursing services are available from licensed nurses. Many nursing homes now provide short-term rehabilitative stays for those recovering from an injury, illness or surgery. Long-term care residents generally have high care needs and complex medical conditions that require routine skilled nursing services. Residents typically share a room and are served meals in a central dining area unless they are too ill to participate. Activities are also available. Some facilities have a separate unit for Alzheimer's residents.

- a. Also Known As: Convalescent Care; Nursing Center; Long Term Care Facility
- b. Payment Sources: Private Pay; Medicare; Medicaid
- c. Price Range: \$4000 to \$8000 per month

Alzheimer's Care

Numerous senior housing options for people with dementia or Alzheimer's are available. With memory impaired, it is important to have 24-hour support and structured activities to ensure their safety and quality of life. Many families try to care for their loved ones at home, which can be extremely difficult given the skill that is required to care for a person with memory problems.

If you need to consider a community, understand that Alzheimer's care is delivered in the assisted living setting, as well as in nursing homes and occasionally in personal care homes. Generally, the residents live in semi-private apartments and have structured activities delivered by trained staff members. Most of these living environments have secured or locked areas to ensure no one wanders off. Many times, within the secured areas, residents have access to outdoor walking paths or gardens.

- a. Also Known As: Memory Care; Dementia Care
- b. Payment Sources: Private Pay; Medicaid
- c. Price Range: \$3000 to \$7000 per month

Residential Care Homes

Residential care homes are private homes that typically serve residents who live together and receive care from live-in caretakers. These homes offer assisted care services for seniors who want a more private, home-like community. Assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing are typically provided. Amenities and nursing services vary greatly between homes. Ask about their services when you tour.

- a. Also Known As: Board and Care Homes; Group Homes; Adult Family Homes
- b. Payment Sources: Private Pay; Medicaid (in some instances)
- c. Price Range: \$1500 to \$3000 per month depending on the services and level of care provided

Respite Care

Respite care provides a temporary break for caregivers by allowing a resident to have a short-term stay in a community that can meet their needs. Many assisted living communities and nursing homes have a respite care program. Residents typically stay from a week to a month, depending on their situation. They receive all of the services of the community. Respite stays may also serve as a "get acquainted" period for the senior. Many residents find that they enjoy their stay and decide to move in soon after the short-term

visit. Respite programs are available for assisted living and Alzheimer's residents.

- a. Also Known As: Short-Term Stay Programs
- b. Payment Sources: Private Pay; Medicaid (in some instances)
- c. Price Range: \$75 - \$150 per day

Home Care

Home care allows older people to remain in their own homes while receiving the assistance they need to help them remain independent. Typically, home care involves providing assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing and meal preparation or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as transportation, paying bills, making appointments and simply being there to provide companionship and emotional support. Home care services range from once a week to 24 hours a day depending on the needs of the client.

- a. Also Known As: Home Health Care; In-Home Personal Care
- b. Payment Sources: Private Pay; Medicare/Medicaid via certified home health agencies
- c. Price Range: Typically an hourly fee

Senior Housing Options Comparison

	Independent Living Communities	Assisted Living	Nursing Home	Alzheimer's Care
Cost Per Month	\$1,000 - 3,000	\$2,000 - 4,000	\$4,000 - 8,000	\$3,000 - 7,000
Meals Per Day	Meal Plan Options	3+	3+	3+
Medication Management	Varies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personal Care	No (Most)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mobility Assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accepts Wheelchairs	No	Varies	Varies	Yes
Alzheimer's / Dementia Care	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
On-Site Nurses	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transportation	No (Most)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incontinence Care	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Housekeeping	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personal Laundry	No (Most)	Yes	Yes	Varies