

Retirement Housing Choices

Searching for retirement housing for yourself or a loved one is often a personal lifestyle choice and many options exist ranging from resort-style golf course retirement communities with amenities like clubhouses and activity programs to specialized care units for individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. Fortunately, there are many types of retirement housing to suite every senior lifestyle need – from active adult communities to skilled nursing care and assisted living communities. As seniors age, some elder care needs grow. Many retirement housing offer options in the level of care an individual receives, and create “individual personal care programs” to meet health care and personal care needs. Many retirement communities, such as Continuing Care Retirement Communities, offer a wide range of resident choices to accommodate seniors in the same retirement community as their needs change. This enables them to maintain their social network and participate in preferred activities as long as they are able.

Choosing the type of retirement housing most appropriate for you or your loved one, and knowing what to look for in those facilities can include researching a wide range of options and asking the right questions. The following list of retirement housing options is a good place to start your research.

Active Adult Community

An active adult community is for healthy seniors who would like to move to some sort of retirement housing, but remain active within an environment that encompasses a sense of community. Often members will purchase their homes and pay a homeowners' association fee to cover maintenance, and resort-like amenities and conveniences such as a clubhouse, pool, and other amenities that are included.

When shopping for an active adult community you should look for:

- Security – A quality active adult community will have a 24/7 security crew that will patrol the entire community. Look for a security guard positioned at an entrance gate or other points of entrance into the community.
- Satisfaction of Residents – Talking to the residents who are already living at the active adult community will tell you everything you need to know about the quality of living, staff, security, and will answer any other questions you may have. Interacting with those who live at the community will also tell you a lot about the type of people who live there already and may offer you help in determining whether you will enjoy living there.
- Health Services – Many active adult communities offer health services even though most of the residents are in good health. This benefit provides for an easy transition from independent living to assisted living.

Assisted Living Communities

Assisted living communities are designed for seniors who would like to remain living independently, but need some assistance with daily elder care. Services can be added on as they are needed, and include personal care, medication management, meal preparation, and social activities.

When shopping for assisted living communities you should look for:

- Services Available – A quality assisted living community will have a variety of staff who are qualified to take care of personal needs, medication management, and other services as they are needed.
- Social Activities – Many assisted living communities encourage social activities among the residents, and will hold various events throughout each week.
- Licensing – The assisted living community you are considering should meet both local and state licensing requirements.
- Living Accommodations – Make sure that all the accommodations, including the staff, suit you or your loved ones needs. This includes safety, cost, friendliness, and any other requirements you may have.

Nursing Home

Nursing homes are for those that require skilled nursing care. These facilities have qualified staff ready to assist with medical or personal care needs.

