

# Assisted Living Resource Guide

Thank you for requesting this Assisted Living Resource Guide. We hope it answers your questions about what assisted living communities offer, when it's an appropriate level of care for your loved one, and how to choose a location that can provide the proper services that respect the needs and wants of the individual resident.

## **What assisted living communities offer**

The purpose of assisted living is to maximize and maintain resident independence for as long as possible. Assisted living offers residents a unique mix of companionship, independence, privacy, and security in a home-like setting. Most assisted living residents are seniors, including those with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Some communities serve individuals of any age with developmental disabilities, while others serve individuals with particular medical conditions or needs. Because each person's needs are based on their unique situations, Brooking Park is built on the the concept of delivering person-centered care and services. That means the care and services provided meet the residents' individual needs and preferences.



Assisted living is ideal for seniors who want or need help with some of the activities of daily living - preparing meals, getting to the bathroom in the middle of the night, housekeeping, medication management, and transportation to appointments. An assisted living community is a great option that fosters independence, while providing a safe environment.

Assisted living communities offer the safety and security of 24-hour support and access to care, with help just steps away. However, privacy and independence are also encouraged. A good community will develop a personalized plan that meets a resident's specific needs and accommodates any disabilities, while giving the resident the freedom to do what they can for themselves. Some communities provide apartment-style living with scaled down kitchens, while others provide studio apartments. In some, sharing a room can help keep expenses down. Most have a common dining area and common areas for social and recreational activities.

### **When is assisted living an appropriate level of care for your loved one?**

It's not always easy to tell when a family member or loved one needs more help. Signs that may indicate a look at assisted living include:

- A change in weight or eating habits. This may be a sign that someone isn't eating well because shopping or cooking is difficult.
- Frequent bruises start appearing. This may be a sign of falling, or mobility and balance problems.
- Personal hygiene becomes neglected or clothes get worn repeatedly without washing. This can indicate that doing laundry and bathing is physically challenging.
- The house and yard aren't as clean and tidy as they used to be.
- Doctor's appointments and medication regimens are forgotten or ignored. This may be due to memory loss.
- A loss of interest in family or favorite activities. This can be an indicator of depression, which is common in seniors who are isolated and alone.

Often, a person will be in denial about their own need for extra help, as they might fear losing their independence and sense of self-determination. They may try to hide some of the warning signs, or attribute changes in personality to outside circumstances. However, there are many different levels of care available and those who want to retain their independence can do so while still getting the help and attention they need. Assisted living may be considered an intermediate between independent living and nursing home care. If someone only needs minimal assistance, independent living might be a better choice.

If someone has a lot of medical needs, nursing homes or other facilities with skilled medical care might be the better consideration.

### **How to choose an assisted living community**



There are large differences between the services offered at assisted living communities. Although weighing all the choices can seem overwhelming at first, it can also mean that people can find a facility that is perfectly suited to their individual needs and preferences. Remember, the residents and staff at a particular community matter more than specific amenities. It's the people that truly make any place enjoyable to live at, including an assisted living community. There should be an active social atmosphere, where the residents are friendly and the staff is caring and warm.

There are several things to look for regarding the present residents of a community:

- Do residents appear happy?
- Do they enjoy interacting with one another?
- Do they seem like people who would be good friends and neighbors?
- Are there hobbies or groups on-site that look interesting?

There are also several criteria for what to look for in the staff:

- Do they have time to speak with residents or do they seem rushed?
- Do they appear genuinely interested in potential residents and guests?
- Do they interact warmly with current residents?
- How do they handle emergencies?
- Is there a high turnover for staff members?

The most important factor when choosing an assisted living community is that it feels friendly, safe, and comfortable. While the community should be clean and well maintained, don't place too much emphasis on surface appeal, such as designer furnishings, gourmet meals, and impeccable grounds. The best community won't necessarily be the most fancy or expensive, but the one that feels closest to home. Other considerations include:

- Does it feel homey? This is a personal preference. Some people prefer a smaller, cozier environment, while others would you rather be in a larger, bustling place with more activities. Exterior design, such as gardens or other greenery, can also be important.
- Does the facility offer interesting activities? Are there hobbies or activities on site, or transportation available to outside ones? Does the facility have amenities such as a gym, recreation center, library, or a chapel?
- Is the food appealing? Do residents have the option of eating in their room if they choose? What kinds of food are served? Is it nutritious and appetizing? Are their different food options available?
- What about pets or overnight guests? Many communities allow pets, but often with size restrictions. Also, some places have age restrictions which limit the ability of children or grandchildren to stay overnight.
- How are health problems handled? How does the facility handle both emergency and non-emergency problems? If a resident develops a medical condition, will they be able to remain at the facility? At what point would they be required to move elsewhere for medical care?
- Is the community in compliance with state and local licensing requirements? In the U.S., each state has different standards, so you will want to check with your local regulatory agency to make sure that the community is licensed and in compliance. You can also check the Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been lodged against the place.

Don't forget that friends and family can also be great resources when trying to choose the right place. Ask them for referrals, and schedule tours of places that sound appealing. This is a very important life decision, and it's a good idea to take time to make sure it's the best decision for the resident and their family.

## Assisted Living at Brooking Park

Our community is designed to deliver the best in person-centered care, where the needs and wants of each resident are taken into consideration when creating their individualized care plan. We try to give each resident as much independence as they want, while at the same time ensuring a safe and secure place when they can feel at home. Some of the highlights of living with us include:



- Personalized apartments
- Access to full nursing care
- Restaurant style dining available all day
- All-inclusive monthly fees
- Full activity schedule with many planned offsite day trips
- Rated one of the Top Tier Best nursing homes in Missouri by U.S. News and World's Report

Brooking Park has special relationships with other extraordinary organizations. We share a campus with our independent living counterpart The Willows at Brooking Park. We're right across the street from the highly respected St. Luke's Hospital. Our programs are backed by the expertise of St. Andrew's Resources for Seniors, a faith-based, nonprofit organization that has provided retirement living options, lifestyle security, enhanced well-being, and health and independence to seniors in Missouri for more than 50 years.

We encourage you view our website at [www.brookingpark.org](http://www.brookingpark.org) or give us a call at 314-495-8651 for more details. Better yet, come visit our community and see for yourself why so many seniors choose to make a home with us. It's our residents and our staff that make us so desirable, and we welcome all newcomers with open arms and caring hearts.