



In-Home Care Checklist

When you've decided to seek in-home care for yourself or a loved one, you most likely have a picture in your mind of how things will work. While it's important to have a list of priorities and expectations, it's even more helpful when you can clearly communicate these to a potential caregiver. Aligning your wish list with a caregiver's services can help ensure a successful transition to in-home care, and can reduce stress for everyone involved. Use the checklist below to create a list of caregiver requirements.

Agency Attributes

This high-level set of attributes sets the framework for your discussion. Consider the level of medical training or certification you feel is necessary, and what client services the provider may offer. These small items may help make the difference between your top candidates.

- Is the caregiver licensed to practice in your state? Does he or she hold an accreditation from a third-party organization such as CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), CCAC (Continuing Care Accreditation Commission), or JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)?
- Does the agency conduct background checks on all employees?
- Does the agency offer a free initial in-home consultation?
- What type of staff is available to deliver service? For example: registered nurse, physical therapist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, nutritionist, social worker, homemaker/home health aide, etc.
- How can a customer contact management and/or provide feedback on a caregiver?
- How available are representatives for the agency? Is there someone available 24 hours, 7 days a week, or in more limited hourly shifts?
- Does the agency provide a single caregiver per client, or does it offer a team approach where a client may be visited by several different team members during the time of service?

Services Needed

This is the most likely the most important group of questions to consider, as it directly affects the daily or weekly care you or your loved one will be receiving. Consider the level of assistance that is needed, specifically reviewing the following:

Personal Care Services

- Bathing, Grooming, Hygiene
- Mobility Assistance (Walking, Transferring, and Positioning)
- Toileting and Incontinence Care
- Feeding and Special Diet Preparation
- Medication Reminders

Companionship and Housekeeping Services

- Meal Preparation
- Laundry
- Light Housekeeping
- Companionship and Conversation
- Grocery Shopping/Errands
- Incidental Transportation
- Grooming Guidance

Specialized Care

Your loved one may have additional special needs that should be considered when hiring a caregiver, especially if the needs require medical support. Many caregivers offer special care for common conditions associated with aging, so it is important to discuss this during your initial consultation to ensure they can provide the needed care to your loved one. Ask if their caregiving staff can meet needs associated with:

- Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Physical or Mental Disabilities
- Neuromuscular Injuries such as stroke
- Post-Surgery and Rehab support
- Fall, Injury, or Wander Risks
- Hospice Care
- General medical support from a private nurse

Frequency of Help Needed

Now is also the time to consider the amount of help you or your loved one needs assistance. This can range from a few hours at a time, to around-the-clock care. You may want to consider easing into the new arrangement as well, so be sure to ask about the policy on changing the amount of support you will receive, and how that could possibly scale over time. Ask yourself, do you need help:

- Mornings Only
- Evenings Only
- Overnight Only
- 24 hours a day
- 1-2 days a week
- 3-4 days a week
- 5 days a week
- 7 days a week
- Live-in Care

Payment Options

Finally, one of the earliest conversations you should have with a potential caregiver or agency is about payment options. Some agencies offer financial consultation, and almost all should have an in-depth understanding of common financial options, including government-funded programs. When you are speaking to your potential caregiver be sure to ask if he or she accepts:

- Medicare
- VA Benefits
- Long-Term Insurance
- Medigap
- Personal Insurance
- Out-of-Pocket Payments