



## FEATURE ARTICLE FROM ALWAYS BEST CARE

### **Assisted Living Communities**

by Stephen Trahan

Assisted living communities can be an excellent alternative to more expensive nursing home care. Many older people are choosing assisted living to maintain freedom and independence when they begin to need more care than families can provide in their homes. It is a quality option for older people who do not have relatives that live close, or who have relatives that are busy with careers and small children. Assisted living communities allow them to have a social life and a measure of security at the same time.

Assisted living residents are evaluated to determine what kinds of assistance they will need while they live at the community. Assisted living is often viewed as the best of both worlds, as residents have as much independence as they want with the knowledge that personal care and support services are available if they need them. Assisted living communities are designed to provide residents with assistance with basic ADLs (activities of daily living), such as bathing, grooming, dressing, and more. Some states also allow assisted living to offer medication assistance and/or reminders. Assisted living communities differ from nursing homes in that they don't offer complex medical services.

Most assisted living communities try to maintain a homelike atmosphere and avoid an institutional look or feel. This helps residents feel more like they are in an apartment building rather than a nursing home or hospital. Assisted living communities also employ activities directors to provide entertainment and learning for their senior residents. Music, arts, crafts, games, casinos and bingo parlors, bowling and field trips are popular activities at many assisted living communities.

Assisted living communities often provide other services. Laundry, hair cuts and styling, nail trimming and other regular necessities can be arranged for residents. Outdoor recreation areas are excellent for providing social opportunities and exercise. These areas are also great places to visit with family and friends.

Assisted living communities provide three meals each day, usually served in a dining room. Most assisted living communities have shopping trips so residents can go to the grocery store at least once a week. This helps them maintain a level of independence and dignity by allowing them the opportunity to do their own shopping. It also frees the family to spend valuable time with the resident rather than doing errands.

When older people are no longer able to entirely care for themselves but are not yet ready for a nursing home, assisted living communities can provide the assistance they need and allow them to be as independent as possible. Your local Always Best Care Senior Services office has already visited and researched all the assisted living communities in your area, and they can help you make an informed decision based on an assessment of your needs, desires, location and

budget. An Always Best Care representative will personally escort you on a tour of selected communities, and help you assess the relative merits of each. Look for a clean environment where the residents seem happy. Find a caring staff that enjoys their work. Assisted living quarters may range from single rooms to two bedroom apartments complete with kitchenettes. Some facilities allow couples to share rooms or apartments.

An assessment is needed to determine whether a person can qualify for assisted living. They must demonstrate a level of independence to be considered for assisted living instead of nursing home care. The requirements differ according to where you live, but your Always Best Care coordinator, property director or admissions officer will be able to explain state requirements to you.

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