

18 Questions to Ask on a Tour

A printable checklist for evaluating an assisted living home

How to use this checklist: Bring it on every tour. Ask the same questions at each home. Note answers in the margin. The home that answers all 18 specifically — with numbers, names, and documents — is usually the right one.

Home toured: _____ Date: _____

Person who gave tour: _____ Their role: _____

STAFFING (QUESTIONS 1–3)

1. What is your staff-to-resident ratio during the day, and what does it drop to overnight?

Watch for: vague answers like "we have plenty of staff." A specific ratio is the right answer (e.g., 1:5 days, 1:8 overnight).

2. Who are the people on shift right now — and how long have they worked here?

Watch for: high staff turnover. Long tenure (1+ years) is a quality signal.

3. Is there awake, on-site staff 24 hours a day, or is overnight coverage on-call?

"Awake and on-site" is the right answer. "On-call from upstairs" is a yellow flag for emergencies.

MEDICAL & MEDICATIONS (QUESTIONS 4–6)

4. Who administers medications — a CMT, an RN, or unlicensed staff?

Maryland requires a CMT minimum. Unlicensed staff dispensing meds is not allowed.

5. How do you coordinate with my parent's primary care doctor, and do you have an on-call nurse?

6. Walk me through what happens if my parent falls, refuses a medication, or develops a UTI.

A confident operator has a specific protocol. Vague answers signal an under-trained staff.

DAILY LIFE (QUESTIONS 7–9)

7. What does a typical Tuesday look like here, from breakfast to bedtime?

A real schedule means real programming. "Residents do what they want" usually means TV all day.

8. How do you handle food preferences, cultural foods, and texture-modified diets?

9. Can I visit any time, or are there set visiting hours?

Maryland law forbids restricted visiting outside emergencies. "Come any time" is the right answer.

SAFETY & EMERGENCIES (QUESTIONS 10–12)

10. What is your plan for fires, severe weather, and power outages?

Ask specifically about generator capacity (refrigerators for insulin, oxygen concentrators).

11. How many falls in the last 12 months, and what did you change after each?

A home that says "we don't really have falls" is hiding data. Mature operators track and learn.

12. May I see a copy of your most recent OHCQ inspection report?

Public record. A confident home produces it on the spot. Hedging is a red flag.

PRICING & WHAT'S INCLUDED (QUESTIONS 13–15)

13. What is the all-in monthly price for my parent's care level — with nothing extra billed later?

"Care points" or "service tiers" added after move-in often add \$500–\$2,000/mo to base rate.

14. Which services cost extra — incontinence supplies, two-person transfers, hospice coordination, transportation?

Get the itemized add-on list in writing. Compare against the base rate.

15. How often do rates go up, by how much historically, and how much notice do residents receive?

Maryland requires 45 days' notice minimum. Ask for last 3 years of % increases.

TRANSITIONS & MOVE-OUT (QUESTIONS 16–18)

16. At what point would my parent's needs exceed what your license allows, and what happens then?

A good home tells you discharge triggers up front. An evasive home leaves you to find out later.

17. How do you support a resident transitioning to hospice — do they stay here or move out?

A home that routinely keeps hospice residents is a home that treats aging as a continuum.

18. What is your refund policy on the community fee and the final month?

Community fees: \$2,000–\$5,000. Refund policies vary widely. Get it in writing before signing.

Overall impression of this home

Cleanliness 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Staff warmth 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Resident engagement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10

Pricing transparency 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Honest answers to questions 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
10

Could you picture your parent here? Yes No Maybe

Top concern:

Want to use this checklist on a tour of Bright Hands? We answer all 18 questions in person.

[Pick a tour time at brighthandsmd.com/book-tour](https://brighthandsmd.com/book-tour) · or call 301-871-1021