



SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES VS. HOME HEALTHCARE:

understanding your options



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Every adult child wants to provide the best care possible for their senior loved one while **improving their daily quality of life**. This is especially true if your loved one has a chronic health condition, is recovering from a recent surgery, or needs regular assistance with medication management.

Plenty of care options exist to meet your senior loved one's needs, including home healthcare and community care (also referred to as senior living communities). Let's explore the advantages offered by each care type and the factors to consider as you decide between them.



What Is Home Healthcare?

Home healthcare provides a wide range of medical services within a client's home after an injury or illness. Home healthcare is tailored to your senior loved one's needs so they can receive as much or as little support as they need.

Home Healthcare vs. Home Care

First, let's compare home healthcare and home care. These terms are often used interchangeably, and although they do have similarities, they're not the same thing.



Home Healthcare

- ✓ Is prescribed by a physician
- ✓ Offers skilled care provided by healthcare professionals such as nurses
- ✓ Is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or in some cases, private insurance
- ✓ Can provide medical care services including wound care, pain management, medication management, and intravenous therapy as well as speech, occupational, and physical therapy

Home Care

- ✓ Is provided by non-clinical caregivers
- ✓ Is paid for out of pocket
- ✓ Can provide reminders to take medication at the required times, but cannot help with medication management
- ✓ Offers assistance with everyday personal care tasks such as bathing and grooming
- ✓ Can help with household chores, grocery shopping, errands, and meal preparation
- ✓ Can provide transportation as needed and offer socialization opportunities

Assistance Provided by Home Healthcare

With home healthcare, your loved one receives medical assistance from a licensed healthcare professional with tasks such as taking medications, pain management, wound care, and more, depending on their unique needs. They'll also check vitals such as blood pressure, heart rate, temperature, and breathing.

Home healthcare staff often track what the person they're caring for has been eating and drinking to ensure they're getting adequate nutrition; however, they don't assist with meal preparation or daily household tasks.

Care Coordination

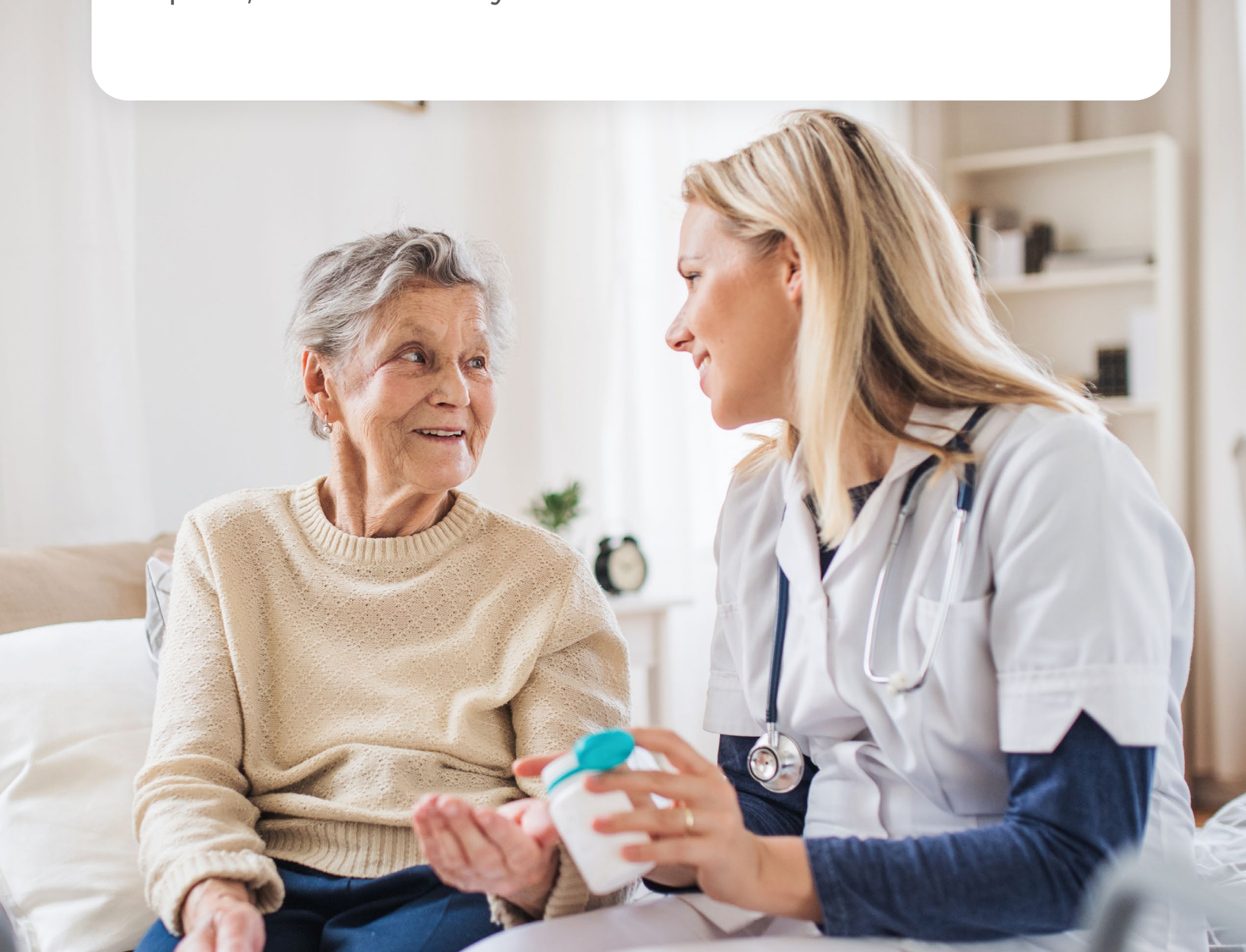
Care coordination is important with any type of medical care, and home healthcare is no exception. Home healthcare staff communicate regularly with the person they're caring for as well as your loved one's other healthcare providers.

Length of Care

The length of care also depends on your loved one's needs and doctor's orders. If your loved one's care needs change in the future, whether they require more or less support, the home healthcare service can adapt to meet their needs.

Hiring a Home Healthcare Provider

If you pursue [home healthcare](#), you'll meet with a care coordinator or nurse through the provider you choose. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure a common understanding of your senior loved one's goals and the services they require. The care coordinator or nurse will then put together a care plan, match your loved one with a caregiver, and determine the frequency of visits. Frequency varies greatly depending on what your loved one requires, whether it's daily one-hour visits or 24-hour care.





What Is Community Care?

Community care is just that: **Tailored care** provided in a community setting, such as senior living. There are a few different **senior living lifestyle choices** available, including independent living, assisted living, and memory care.

Independent Living

Independent living is best for seniors who don't require assistance with **activities of daily living** and simply want to enjoy a low-maintenance lifestyle. Residents in an independent living community give up the burden of everyday chores to spend more time on hobbies and activities they enjoy. Regular events and special programming are offered for residents, as well as both structured and casual social opportunities to make new friends.

Assisted Living

Assisted living is ideal for seniors who require assistance with activities of daily living, whether it's light supportive care such as bathing or dressing, or comprehensive care that places the responsibility of all daily activities in the hands of a trained staff member. Assisted living communities work hard to understand each person's unique needs by conducting regular assessments, working with family members, and coordinating care with the resident's physicians to fine-tune the care provided. Residents receive the support they need during daily activities while participating in enriching activities and making new friends.

Memory Care

Memory care communities are ideal when it's no longer safe for your loved one to live in their current residence due to Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Each resident receives customized programming, including healthcare provider visits every week. High-quality memory care is person-directed care, which means each resident's preferences, choices, and routines are respected. Memory care communities also provide additional security measures to prevent residents from wandering.

Benefits of Senior Living Communities

There are several [benefits of senior living](#), including the following:

✓ AMENITIES

Senior living communities offer a wide range of amenities, from personalized activities to walking trails, pet-friendly accommodations, and more. Communities take a holistic approach to supporting residents and helping them live their best lives.

✓ SERVICES

One of the top benefits of senior living communities is the services often available on-site. For example, finding motivation to exercise is easier when a fitness center is within the community. Additionally, community members have access to on-site medical and healthcare services, such as physical therapy and pharmacies. Some locations also provide other amenities, such as salons.

✓ DINING

Part of living well is enjoying delicious, healthy food. At Cedarhurst, we take pride in our state-of-the-art culinary programs, such as [Crafted by CedarhurstSM](#), where delicious food is carefully prepared by our culinary team. We provide meal options that are heart-healthy, gluten-free, diabetic-friendly, or low-sodium, plus choices designed to preserve cognitive function and Boost Your BrainSM.

✓ **SOCIALIZATION**

As people age, it's natural for their social circles to get smaller. This can lead to feelings of loneliness or isolation. Senior living communities are designed around **social opportunities** to combat feelings of isolation. High-quality communities help residents make new friends with similar interests while they participate in activities or meet up in the dining room over a meal.

✓ **ROUTINE**

A sense of routine is essential for people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Familiarity reduces stress and provides a stable environment. Senior living communities support residents by aligning with their existing routine as much as possible, right down to following an early bird or late riser schedule.





Home Healthcare and Community Care: Things to Consider

The benefits of receiving care at home seem clear, but it's important to consider all points of view, including the downsides, before arriving at a decision. Let's take a look at the aspects you may want to consider, depending on your senior loved one's circumstances.

Is It Safe for Your Loved One to Stay in Their Current Residence?

If your loved one is **experiencing falls**, declines in physical health, or has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, community care provides additional around-the-clock support and security measures that may be beneficial for your loved one.

Is Your Loved One's Residence Fit for Purpose?

With home healthcare, your loved one can continue following their routine as much as possible in their own space. However, it's important to consider if the living space is optimized for your loved one's specific care needs.

For your loved one to stay in their current residence, they may need to make adjustments to their environment. Some changes such as removing clutter, **rightsizing**, and adding grab bars may be relatively simple, but some changes may be more considerable such as adding a stair lift or ramp. Consider the adjustments required and their associated costs, and compare those with the cost of a senior living community to ensure you're making an informed decision.

Is the Home Healthcare Provider the Right Match?

It can take a while to find the right home healthcare provider as you navigate the process of determining your loved one's needs, finding care services, and establishing the care schedule. Additionally, it will take some time for your loved one to adjust to regularly having a new person in their residence.

Is Home Healthcare or a Senior Living Community More Affordable?

One of the top questions about senior living communities is **cost**. Many people make assumptions about the high cost of senior living, but they often find that senior living is less than or equal to the cost of staying in a current residence.

Senior living costs vary from person to person because the price reflects each individual's needs, from the lifestyle to the services your loved one requires. The cost of living in your area can also affect senior living pricing.

Is My Senior Loved One in Good Hands for the Long Term?

When evaluating options, consider how your senior loved one's needs may change over time, especially if they have a progressive condition such as Alzheimer's disease or dementia. Senior living communities have staff members on hand around the clock who are accustomed to meeting the unique care needs of people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia. The best communities also have resources ready to adjust to your loved one's changing needs so they can age in place without having to switch communities.





Where to Get Started with a Senior Living Journey

Senior living communities offer a variety of options to meet the needs of each resident so they have the resources and support they require. With so many choices available, it can be difficult to know where to get started. What should you do to research senior living communities and determine which community best meets your loved one's needs?

Explore our guide [***Where to Start Your Senior Living Story***](#) to learn tips for starting the senior living conversation with your loved one, assessing lifestyle options, finding the right community, and more.