

Adult Day Care

Adult day care offers seniors a safe, structured environment during daytime hours where they participate in a variety of programs and social activities such as games, outings, and arts and crafts. In many cases, meals and snacks are served throughout the day.

Now that Alice and Jim will have a caregiver coming into their home, Alice will have some time to go to the local senior center. Their neighbors participate in activities at the center, and Alice has been wanting to take a computer class there. This will allow Alice to take a much-needed break from taking care of her husband, and she will be able to socialize with others. She can leave the house knowing that Jim is being attended to.

Some adult day care centers offer nursing, nutritional, and rehabilitation services on the premises, or can refer you to professionals in the community. Many adult day services can help people with disabilities live at home and postpone or avoid nursing home or assisted living care. The centers provide respite to caregivers and family members who juggle work and family with caregiver responsibilities during working hours.

Most adult day services are a private-pay option. However, if a center offers a particular service that meets Medicare requirements, such as physical or speech therapy, the program may reimburse for that particular service. Here are some definitions to help you explain the differences in **Medicare** and **Medicaid**:

□ Medicare—a federal health insurance program for people age 65 and older, certain people under 65 with disabilities, and certain people with kidney disease. Eligibility depends on age or disability only.

□ Medicaid—a program of health coverage administered by the states, for certain people with low incomes or very high medical bills. Eligibility depends on age, disability, or family status *and* on an individual's (or family's) income and resources.

Adult day care centers are usually privately-owned, operated by the county government, or by a religious organization. The charges are hourly, weekly or monthly. There are several types of adult day care centers:

□ The Social Model—for the active, independent senior. These individuals are able to function physically and emotionally on their own. Social models provide food, activities, and supervision of seniors during daytime hours. Transportation may or may not be provided.

The Medical Model—for those individuals who are impaired physically and/or cognitively, need assistance with personal care and medications, or who do not need 24-hour supervision, but cannot function independently during the day. This model, if approved under a community care program, may have services reimbursed by Medicaid. Alzheimer’s programs are included in the medical model. They are generally funded by the state through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or through charitable donations of religious organizations.

You Should Consider Adult Day Care if a Senior:

- Is unable to structure his activities or schedule daily events.
- Desires or needs the companionship of others, as well as mental stimulation.
- Cannot fully function independently and should not be left alone.

Questions to Consider

There are many questions you should ask before placing your loved one in adult day care. Finding answers to the questions below will help you assess the quality of a day care facility.

1. Who owns, operates, and sponsors the facility?

In some states, adult day care facilities are not regulated by the state or subject to audits. Contact your state’s Department of Human Services or State Ombudsman’s Office regarding questions you have or to find out about any reports of abusive treatment.

2. Is the center state-licensed?

Some states do not require Adult Day Care facilities to have a state license. If that is the case, do your homework! Check references, call the Better Business Bureau, and make several unexpected visits to observe the staff and to see the patients’ behavior.