



Welcome to the World of Assisted Living

Today, assisted living is the most favored and fastest-growing long-term care option for seniors in the United States. According to the National Survey of Residential Care Facilities, there are over 31,000 assisted living communities nationwide, housing nearly one million seniors.

Assisted living emerged from a shift in public perception, offering an alternative to the less favorable opinion of skilled nursing care 25 years ago. It has since become the fastest-growing residential housing option for older Americans.

The core philosophy of assisted living revolves around treating all residents with dignity, ensuring privacy, and encouraging independence. It prioritizes the concept of "freedom of choice."

What is Assisted Living?

Assisted living communities are designed for older adults who wish to remain independent in a home-like setting but require assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs), such as eating, bathing, dressing, maintaining hygiene, and toileting.

Residents typically have access to shared common areas, which may include:

- Dining and activity rooms
- A cinema room
- A library
- A pool and walking trails
- Other nature-based settings on the grounds

Assisted living communities range from offering basic services like daily meals and activities to luxury accommodations with amenities such as spas and bars.

These communities typically provide 24-hour on-site staff, up to three prepared meals per day, housekeeping services, and some transportation options.

Types of Assisted Living Communities

Assisted living communities vary in size, with some housing as few as 25 residents and others accommodating up to 120 people. These communities are also referred to as adult care or residential care facilities. However, over the past 20 years, the term "facility" has given way to a

more home-like, community-oriented environment, emphasizing not just physical well-being but also emotional and mental health.

The Benefits of Assisted Living

Assisted living allows individuals to maintain their independence despite chronic health conditions, memory loss, or mobility challenges. In addition to daily assistance, there are many other benefits:

- **No home maintenance:** Residents don't need to worry about repairs, cleaning, or other household upkeep.
- **Enhanced physical and mental well-being:** Assisted living communities provide activities that improve health, foster social connections, and build a sense of community.
- **Combating isolation:** Regular interaction with staff and fellow residents can be highly beneficial, especially in combating loneliness, which is harmful to physical, mental, and cognitive health.

Typical Services Provided in Assisted Living

1. Private Living Quarters

Assisted living apartments can range from basic studios to larger one- or two-bedroom apartments with kitchenettes. Some communities offer more spacious units with a wider variety of amenities.

2. Maintenance Services

When appliances break down or repairs are needed, management handles the repairs. Landscaping services are also typically included.

3. Alert System

Many apartments come with emergency medical alert systems, allowing residents to easily contact staff or 911 in case of an emergency.

4. Daily Meals

Most communities provide up to three meals a day as part of the rent. Some offer snacks throughout the day and night.

5. Laundry & Housekeeping

Regular laundry and housekeeping services are often included.

6. Activities & Outings

Communities frequently offer scheduled transportation to doctor's appointments and local errands like grocery shopping and dining out.

7. Classes

Some communities provide classes in various areas, including fitness, yoga, art (painting, writing), technology, and home safety.

Levels of Care

Assisted living communities offer various levels of care, tailored to the individual needs of residents. As health conditions change, residents can move between different care levels to ensure they receive the appropriate assistance.

Not a Nursing Home

Although the term "nursing home" is often used interchangeably with "assisted living," these are two distinct types of care. Assisted living helps with ADLs, while nursing homes provide more intensive care, including 24-hour medical monitoring and specialized services like IV therapy, feeding tubes, and tracheostomies.

The Desirable Way of Life

Assisted living offers older adults a desirable lifestyle by providing improved care, a better physical environment, and enhanced service capacity, all within a community that fosters independence and well-being.

