

“Home care” usually refers to “non-medical” services such as personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping services or transportation. (“Home *Health* Care” covers medical care). Be sure to know what services you need.



When you choose a home care provider, you are inviting someone into your home. Don't let “nice” get in the way of asking tough questions. A little precaution and research can go a long way in giving you peace of mind and preventing problems. Asking friends, relatives or a trusted advisor for home care recommendations is a good start. Your medical providers (such as your hospital discharge planner, social worker or your family doctor) may also have suggestions.

### The 14 Recommended Questions:



1. Does my state license home care? If 'yes' - is the agency licensed? If 'no' - does the agency follow policies and procedures similar to those in a licensed state?
2. Is the agency locally owned and operated? Are the owners on-site actively managing the agency? If the agency is part of a franchise, what 'watchdog' organizations is the franchise a member of?
3. Are the agency's care givers employees or independent contractors? (You might want an agency that knows its employees, not one that just acts as an employment agency.)
4. Are caregivers bonded and insured? (They should be.)
5. What criminal screening and background checks does the agency run on its caregivers? Are these national or simply local?
6. What sort of training do the employees receive? Is training ongoing?
7. Will an agency supervisor evaluate the quality of care you receive? How often?
8. How is billing handled? If private insurance will pay for some of the costs, will the agency bill them directly?
9. If you have a family member who is involved in your care, how does the agency ensure they stay informed and included? What if your family lives in a different state?
10. What provisions are there for backup care? Who do you call if no one shows up? Does the agency have someone on call? After hours? What provisions are there for care during a disaster?
11. What is the process for resolving problems? Who can you call to discuss any issues and be sure to have them resolved?
12. Are you committed to a long contract with the agency?
13. How long will it take to get a care giver?
14. Can the agency provide services to someone in a facility or residential living (hospital, nursing home, assisted living etc)?