

## Things to Observe

- Do residents appear comfortable and content?
- Are residents dressed appropriately and well-groomed?
- Do residents wander in and out of rooms?
- Is there sufficient staff to meet the individual needs of residents?
- Does staff seem happy, helpful and engaged?
- Are call lights answered on a timely basis?
- Does staff connect with residents on a personal level? Do they have meaningful conversations?
- Does the food look and smell appetizing? How is it served?
- Are residents allowed to eat at their own pace?
- Are the common areas attractive and clutter-free? Is there too much noise?
- Is the facility clean and odor-free?
- Is room temperature throughout the facility comfortable?

**For More Information,  
Contact Your Local  
Alzheimer's Association 24/7,  
800-272-3900**

**Alzheimer's Association Greater  
Missouri Chapter**  
160 W. Elfindale  
Springfield, MO 65807  
[www.alz.org/greatermissouri](http://www.alz.org/greatermissouri)

**Alzheimer's Association Greater  
Missouri Chapter**  
2609 E. Broadway, Suite 119  
Columbia, MO 65201  
[www.alz.org/greatermissouri](http://www.alz.org/greatermissouri)

**Alzheimer's Association St. Louis  
Chapter**  
9370 Olive Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63132  
[www.alz.org/stl](http://www.alz.org/stl)

**Alzheimer's Association Heart of  
America Chapter**  
3846 W. 75<sup>th</sup> St.  
Prairie Village, KS 66208  
[www.alz.org/kansascity](http://www.alz.org/kansascity)

### Another Option

For information regarding Adult Day Care that specializes in caring for people with Alzheimer's disease, please call the Department of Health and Senior Services' Section for Long-Term Care Regulation at 573-526-8524.

For More Information on Long-Term Care Facilities:  
**Show Me Long-Term Care**  
<http://www.health.mo.gov/safety/show-melongtermcare/>

**U.S. Government Medicare Site:  
Nursing Home Compare**  
visit <http://www.medicare.gov/>, then type "Nursing Home Compare" in the search engine

For more information on long-term care, call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227)



**Missouri Department of  
Health & Senior Services**  
**Section for Long-Term Care  
Regulation**  
PO Box 570  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
**573-526-8524**  
**Missouri State Long-Term  
Care Ombudsman Program**  
PO Box 570  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
**1-800-309-3282**  
**LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov**  
The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for resident rights in long-term care facilities.

Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 1-800-309-3282. Hearing- and speech-impaired citizens can dial 711.

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**11/13 #455**

## Guide to Selecting an Alzheimer's Special Care Unit



Special Care Units are specifically designed to care for people with Alzheimer's disease.

# What is a Special Care Unit?

→ A special care unit in a licensed long-term care facility is specifically designed to meet the individual needs of people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. A quality unit realizes each person has unique needs; therefore, units differ. A quality unit is person-centered and respects the distinct cultures and values of residents and their families. It is important to find a special care unit that is best for you and your loved one, a comfortable and caring place for your loved one to call home.

## First Steps

→ Plan on visiting several long-term care settings. Visit often and spend time in the special care unit at different times--during the day, at mealtimes, in the evening, on weekends.

### **Ask to see the Alzheimer's**

#### **→ Special Care Services**

**Disclosure Form.** It outlines the philosophy, training, activities and safety measures designed to assist your loved one. Use the form as a conversation starter during your visit.

- Ask to see the facility's most recent survey or inspection from the Department of Health and Senior Services. Discuss any issues that may affect your loved one.
- As you visit, ask questions. Be open about your needs and those of your loved one. Be aware. Trust your instincts. Remember, this will be your loved one's new home: do you feel comfortable? Will your loved one?

## Questions to Ask

Please note that the following questions are a starting point. You can personalize them, depending on your loved one's needs.

- What sets this unit apart from other care settings and makes it suitable for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias?
- What are the criteria to live in the special care unit? What personal monitoring systems are used? What criteria must be met before someone can be moved?
- Does staff receive training to care for residents with dementia?
- What is the facility's restraint policy?
- Are there additional costs for the special care unit? What determines the cost? Is Medicaid accepted?
- How are decisions made? Are families welcome in the decision-making process?
- Are families' schedules considered, allowing families the opportunity to attend care plan meetings?
- Are families notified if their loved one's medical needs and care options change?
- Are family members welcome to eat with their loved ones? Can families participate in activities and continue family traditions within the special care unit?
- Is there a Resident Council or a Family Council?
- Can family members visit any time, day or night? Where can families visit privately with their loved ones?
- Are pets allowed to visit or live with residents?
- What spiritual support services are offered? Do these services meet your loved one's needs?
- If residents are unable to communicate verbally, how does staff understand their needs?
- Do meaningful, structured activities take place? What about spontaneous activities?
- Are there activities during the day, in the evening, on weekends?
- Are residents encouraged to maintain their mobility? What kind of supports are in place to assist them? Can residents move about freely?
- Are residents allowed to maintain their daily routines? Are residents' preferences and lifelong patterns accommodated?
- Does an Ombudsman volunteer visit the care setting?