

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

*Brought to you by*



[www.serenity-senior-care.com](http://www.serenity-senior-care.com)

---

The prospect of securing a competent home care provider does not have to be a daunting task. This free guide was compiled to help you navigate the process and find the best care for your loved one.

---

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

## Introduction

If this is the first time you are faced with finding appropriate home care for a senior parent or other loved one, it is possible that you're feeling a bit anxious, somewhat stressed or completely overwhelmed.

Your situation may have come about as a result of a health crisis that left the patient requiring extended care of some sort. The level of care may be beyond the scope of loving family and supportive friends, so now you need the professional services of a trustworthy care provider.

But where do you begin? You've got a thousand questions and you are afraid you could overlook some of those that are really critical.

At the very least you know you must find a provider who is competent and understands how to manage the special situations peculiar to your case. And most of all, you must be satisfied that there is compatibility between the caregiver and your loved one.

Well, you can go ahead and take a deep breath, slowly exhale, then relax! This handy guide will remove the uncertainty and ease you comfortably through that process.

While we don't promise it will answer *all* your questions, by the time you get to the end, you will be much better informed and significantly more confident to move forward with your search.

## What Exactly is Home Care?

The term **Home Care** is a broad expression that is frequently used to describe any form of care that is administered in the privacy and comfort of a patient's home

But to be precise, home care specifically refers to the class of care that is considered **non-medical**. That means the responsibilities to the patient are *not* of a medical nature and they can be discharged by anyone who is not a licensed professional.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

Typical tasks include assisting the patient with getting in and out of bed, toileting, bathing, dressing, cooking and running errands. A trained **caregiver** or **family member** may perform these duties.

The other class of home care is known as **Home Health Care**, which refers to formal **medical care**. Licensed health care professionals generally deliver this class of care - nurses, home care aides, physical, occupational and respiratory therapists, and physicians in some cases.

Even though the terms **Home Care** and **Home Health Care** are very often used interchangeably, the factor that is common to both services is that they are always performed *in the patient's residence*.

## Why Choose Home Care?

There are any number of reasons why people consider the need for home care for themselves or a loved one. As we age we lose strength in our bones and muscles; we're not as flexible or agile as we used to be; we may begin to experience loss of vision, memory and functions we formerly took for granted.

We may have developed a disability, or may be struggling with chronic pain that now severely limits our activities. Maybe we are getting over major surgery or have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

These are some of the conditions that may require the need for home care. Listed below are some facts and advantages that favor choosing home care over other forms of care:

- Care is administered in surroundings that are comfortable and familiar to the patient. It is *home*, and there is no place like it.
- Care can be flexible and tailored to whatever special needs the patient may have.
- The ability for many recipients to continue a domestic routine and retain a measure of control over their life, helps them keep a feeling of dignity.

## How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

- Studies have shown that care administered in an environment that is familiar, has a positive influence on the rate of recovery and improvement.
- When surveyed, 97% of older adults and seniors said that they would choose home care over a nursing home or any other kind of institutional care.

Home care benefits the patient on practical, physical and emotional levels, while bringing peace of mind to their loved ones.

## Preparing Your Loved One for Home Care

The explosive growth of the Home Care industry has made it easy for seniors and adults to take advantage of the variety of programs now available.

Surveys have shown that given a choice, more than 97% of people over the age of 50 would prefer to receive care services in their own residence, rather than move into an institution.

Still for many people, the idea of having a total stranger come into their home to discharge necessary care-related duties, requires some mental adjustment and acceptance.

The transition can be awkward especially if the services involve personal activities such as bathing, toileting, hygiene and so on.

The best way to prepare your parent or loved one for this change is to discuss it with them. This may go over very well with some and others will resist and balk at the idea, expressing feelings of abandonment and rejection.

If you are convinced that home care is the most viable solution in your situation, then you must be tactful as you point out the benefits and conveniences to be gained from hiring a care provider.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

Be patient, but firm and persistent. It may take some time to persuade your loved one. Eventually they'll see your intentions are motivated by love and will ultimately embrace the idea.

## Important Questions to Ask

It is often in an emotionally charged atmosphere that you find yourself having to locate home care for your loved one. You're still grieving over the medical, physical or mental condition that created the need for your search in the first place.

This environment can seriously impair your ability to think objectively about the questions you need to ask, so that you can make sound judgments regarding the level of care you may need.

Understand that even though the care provider is there to serve you, it is also a business, and you or your insurance company will be paying for their services.

That gives you the right to ask questions about everything that could define your relationship, should you decide to engage their services. Don't prejudge a question and not ask it because you think it may be silly. Ask as many question as you can. It's how you'll find out what you need to know.

And to further assist you, here are some questions you should ask your prospective care provider:

- **What care services do you offer?**

Services can range from light activities such as companionship, laundry and meal preparation, to skilled professional services that include injections, intravenous therapy and wound care. There is also transportation, physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and nutritional counseling. Services may be offered as a package or individually. If the best solution for you requires a combination of services not available in their schedule, ask if they would customize a service for you. Most providers will do their best to accommodate you.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

- **Are services available around the clock?**

Care services are usually performed around-the-clock, by the hour, by the shift or by the job.

- **Do you use employees or contract workers?**

This question goes to the heart of potential liability issues should a caregiver get hurt or otherwise be the source of a problem in the home. Employees should be covered by workman's compensation. Independent contractors should carry their own liability coverage.

- **What type of employee background checks do you make?**

You are going to be giving strangers access to your home and by extension, access to your valuables. You need therefore to be satisfied that adequate background checks for criminal history and any other unacceptable social behavior have been conducted. This should include driving record checks as well.

- **How long have you been in business?**

You may feel more comfortable doing business with a company that has been around for a few years, than with one just now starting out. But length of time in business is not sufficient to make a judgment. If you assume a degree of wisdom comes from experience, you should also look at the owners and administrators for their experience and clues to their competency.

- **What formal complaints have been lodged against you?**

According to the law of averages, sooner or later a care provider will have at least one serious or malicious complaint lodged against them. It could be for patient abuse, fraud or breach of contract. Most providers are deeply committed to the work they do and would use any legitimate complaint as an opportunity to correct the problem. As long as there are no legal restrictions, the provider should be more than willing to discuss any complaints on record.

- **Will I be allowed to check references?**

A reputable and honest care provider will welcome the opportunity to have you talk to others who are already using their services. As a consumer it gives you the best indication of the quality of care they provide. If a care recipient is happy or disappointed, they'll only be too happy to tell you all about it.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

- **Are bills calculated by the service or by the hour?**

Considering the range of services that are available today, you could expect bill calculations to be made in any number of ways - by the job, the shift, weekly or any other agreed schedule.

- **How are payments made?**

Payment methods will vary according to each case. Patients may pay for services directly, or in conjunction with third parties such as Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance, worker's compensation and other payers. You ought to be aware of your loved one's insurance coverage and what care services it will pay.

- **Can I select the caregiver I want?**

It is extremely important to have harmony and mutual compatibility between the caregiver and the recipient. Their personalities should integrate well. That is a decision best made directly between those involved - the caregiver and the patient. A caring provider like <http://Serenity-Senior-Care.com> routinely makes that possible with our face-to-face interview process.

- **How are emergency situations handled?**

The response to an emergency would certainly depend on the nature of the emergency. What you're hoping to find out from this question is whether or not there is a system in place to handle emergencies or if there is a special number to call for instructions.

## The Face-to-Face

Sometime after the preliminary telephone contact and the initial fact-finding mission comes the next step, the home interview. This is when a home care company representative, and perhaps a caregiver, meet with the care recipient in their home.

It's an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other and begin working on what duties are to be performed. The care providers will want to tour the home in order to recommend minor safety changes that would be in the recipient's best interest.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

They may suggest things like:

- Rearranging furniture in places where you may need to allow a wheelchair.
- Removing throw rugs to avoid tripping in cases where a walker is to be used.
- Using light bulbs with stronger wattage to improve the visibility of patients with failing eyesight.
- Or simply installing night-lights to illuminate the vital pathways throughout the home.

These are the types of suggestions a dedicated provider will make to ensure a comfortable care experience for the recipient. It also gives the care recipient a closeup view of the provider's professionalism and expertise.

The face-to-face interview is the ideal environment for the players to feel each other out and identify their compatibility, while they sort out the details of any possible working agreement. It sets the stage for everyone to be in total agreement on what their particular role is, and what the other's expectations are.

## The Agreement

Any business agreement you make should be formalized in writing with copies retained by the care provider and the care recipient. The agreement is essential to upholding or challenging any disputes that may arise later.

It should cover the specifics of your care arrangement with details of which duties will and will not be performed; the date and time care will commence; terms of payment; any special instructions; emergency procedures, emergency contact information for both parties, and all other pertinent matters.

# How to Choose the Right Home Care Provider

## Do Your Own Background Check

It's always a smart idea to obtain third party, unbiased reports on the business conduct of any prospective care provider. Even though they may provide high quality care you do want to be sure that they have a clean bill of health in other important areas as well.

What kind of reputation does the provider have in the local business community? Have many complaints been lodged against them and what's the nature of those complaints? Do they have a high employee turnover rate? Why? How do they handle disputes?

You can contact your local Better Business Bureau (BBB) or Chamber of Commerce for information regarding some of these matters. You can also check with the state health department or the Office of the Inspector General for reports of fraud.

Conversely, if you were to experience problems with a care provider, you may register any complaints of your own with these organizations.

## Conclusion

There you have it, a slice of what goes into the search for a home care provider. It is our sincere hope that you found this guide to be useful.

**Serenity Senior Care, LLC** is a full service, licensed and registered home health care agency operating in the New York/New Jersey area. We are dedicated to providing the very best care to all our patients in an atmosphere of respect and compassion.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us today, so that we may place our ***team with the caring touch*** at your disposal.

**Tel:** 973-338-0124  
**E-mail:** [care@serenity-senior-care.com](mailto:care@serenity-senior-care.com)  
**Web Site:** [www.serenity-senior-care.com](http://www.serenity-senior-care.com)