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WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN SELECTING A NURSING HOME

The following is a checklist from the *Nursing Home Information* site on the Internet of points to consider when selecting a nursing home for you or a family member. Keep these points in mind as you talk with staff members and tour potential homes. They can also help you when comparing different homes.

Administration:

- Does the nursing home have the required current license from the province?
- Do staff members show patients genuine interest and affection?
- Do patients look well cared for and generally content?
- Are patients allowed to wear their own clothes, decorate their rooms, and keep a few prized possessions on hand?
- Is there a written statement of patients' rights? Is this statement displayed where it can be seen?

General Physical Considerations:

Comfort

- Is the nursing home clean and orderly?
- Are toilet and bathing facilities easy for handicapped patients to use?
- Is the home well lighted?
- Is the home reasonably free of unpleasant odors?
- Are rooms well ventilated and kept at a comfortable temperature?

Safety

- Are there wheelchair ramps where necessary?
- Are there grab bars in toilet and bathing facilities?
- Are there handrails on both sides of the hallways?
- Is there an automatic sprinkler system and automatic emergency lighting?
- Are there portable fire extinguishers?
- Are exit doors unobstructed and unlocked from the inside and easily accessible?
- Are emergency evacuation plans posted in prominent locations?

- Are there smoke detectors and fire alarms on every floor?
- Is there a fire station near the home?

Nursing Services:

- Is at least one registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) on duty day and night?
- Are nurse call buttons located at each patient's bed and in toilet and bathing facilities?

Food Services:

- Is the kitchen clean and reasonably tidy?
- Are at least three meals served each day?
- Are patients given enough food?
- Are special meals prepared for patients on therapeutic or other diets?
- Do patients who need help receive it, whether in the dining room or in their own rooms?

Patient's Rooms:

- Is a married couple allowed to share a room?
- Do all rooms have a window to the outside?
- Is there a curtain or screen available to provide privacy for each bed whenever necessary?
- Does each patient have a reading light, a comfortable chair, and a closet and chest of drawers for personal belongings?

HEALTH WATCH

CHEWED NOT SWALLOWED You may have noticed the advertisements saying that taking an aspirin during a heart attack could dramatically improve your odds of survival. But, according to Dr. Bob Lanier, this is one time your medicine should be chewed — not swallowed.

It happens most often in the early morning — that crushing chest pain that signifies the ultimate crisis in life — a heart attack!! Right after you call 911 — you might want to chew up an aspirin — chew it — don't just swallow it. (*Can't stand the taste of aspirin — better get used to it — the taste of aspirin could be