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HomeTimes®

America's Choice In Home Care

Your resource for an at home senior lifestyle.



The Company Behind the Caregiver: What to Look For

When you search for home care services, you're not looking to buy a product off the shelf. You're making an altruistic decision to preserve a loved one's independence, dignity, and quality of life.

That's why it's vital to do thorough research. When you evaluate home care companies, consider their values to measure the support they deliver. You want the caregivers they employ to be competent, compatible, and compassionate.

Important Qualities of a Home Care Agency

As you begin your home care journey, here are seven important aspects to look for in a home care company:

1. Reputation Speaks Volumes

Quality agencies perform in-depth interviews and routine background checks to ensure caregivers are suited for the job. Professional caregivers understand how to navigate the initial rapport-building period and interpersonal dynamics. This creates a loyal and dedicated workforce that will establish a successful relationship with you, your loved one, and other family members.

2. Power of a National Network

You want to be sure professional caregivers have a strong team behind them. A national network of agencies gives your

loved one the supportive safety net they need. For example, if your caregiver can't visit due to unexpected circumstances, a national network ensures a backup professional caregiver will be assigned.

3. Quality of Care

Be cautious of a company that promises "minimal upfront costs" or is not transparent about actual expenses. Today's home care market is crowded with smaller, independent agencies that lack the experience and accountability of a national network. Focus on an agency, like Visiting Angels, that offers resources for its caregivers to help them enhance their knowledge and skill sets.

4. Listening to Learn

Caregivers should understand your loved one's needs. Adding a professional caregiver to the team requires a blending of personalities — and listening to each other provides an optimal environment for care. A quality agency will have an existing framework to provide personalized support, as well as a history of facilitating outstanding client/caregiver relationships.

5. Flexible Care Options

A company with a long history of serving seniors and families understands their unique needs and provides different levels of personalized care. As your loved one's needs evolve, a professional caregiver can make recommendations to ensure they remain safe and comfortable.

6. Education Matters

Training is vital to developing and retaining a strong workforce. Make sure the home care companies you're reviewing have an active educational component. Consider an agency that prioritizes continued professional development and trains caregivers in specialized areas, such as dementia care, fall prevention, and social isolation remedies. This demonstrates a commitment to providing the highest standard of care.

Contact your local home care office today to see how you and your family can benefit from Visiting Angels' customized programs and services. Call 800-365-4189 to find out more.



7 Bathroom Safety Tips to Prevent Falls and Injuries

When it comes to elder care safety in a loved one's home, the bathroom deserves immediate attention.

More than 230,000 Americans are injured in the bathroom each year, according to the most recent survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Data shows that falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults — leading to costly fractures, head injuries, and hospitalizations that can result in loss of independence and sometimes death.

Some of the leading causes of slips and falls in the bathroom can occur from:

- Getting in and/or out of the shower/bathtub
- Wet, slippery floors
- Broken tiles
- Poor lighting
- Bending for hard-to-reach areas
- Standing up or sitting down on a toilet
- Tripping over bathmats, towels, or other objects

How You Can Improve Bathroom Safety

Here are seven tips to help you optimize your loved one's bathroom to reduce the risk of accident or injury:

1. Install Grab Bars

Grab bars are an indispensable tool for senior bathroom safety. They give your loved one something to grip when moving in and out of the tub or getting on and off the toilet. Grab bars will also provide a secure place for your loved one to hold before falling. Install grab bars that are securely screwed into wall studs instead of suction cup versions, which could pop off when under pressure.

2. Install Non-Slip Surfaces

Many falls are caused by slippery surfaces, such as tile or

linoleum on the bathroom floor, or fiberglass or ceramic tub/shower surfaces. To prevent slips, consider installing non-slip surfaces on your loved one's bathroom floor, as well as in the tub or shower.

Non-slip decals or mats should be applied to slippery surfaces — especially those that can become even more slippery when wet. Keep an eye on these decals to make sure they don't loosen and create a tripping hazard.

3. Improve Accessibility

Commonly used items should be within easy reach in areas like bathrooms where the risk of slipping or falling is heightened. This is especially important in the shower/bathtub. Make sure that soap, shampoo, conditioner, towels, and any other bathing items are within easy reach.

4. Remove Obstacles and Clutter

Bathroom safety can be improved by removing items that are easily tripped over. One of the biggest risks for the elderly is tripping over the side of their bathtub. Installing a walk-in shower or walk-in bathtub can prevent this from occurring.

Remove scatter rugs, which are easy to slip on or trip over. Remember to only use bathmats with a non-slip backing, and securely hang them up when not in use. Avoid keeping items such as trash cans, scales, and toilet brushes in high-traffic areas where they could cause a fall.

5. Reduce Risk of Over-Exertion

Overexertion is the second-most common cause of injuries in the bathroom, behind falls, according to the CDC. Consider installing a secure bathing seat and a raised seat for your loved one's toilet to help them avoid over-exerting him or herself.

6. Improve Visibility

For many elderly people, frequent urination — especially at night — is a common complaint. By installing night lights that illuminate the walkway from the bedroom to the bathroom, you can reduce the chance of a fall or injury.

7. Prevent Hot Water Burns

The elderly have thinner, more delicate skin and can take longer to notice hot temperatures. Because of this, they are often at increased risk of burns caused by hot water. Make sure your loved one's bathroom taps are labeled and keep hot water temperatures to a maximum of 120 F°.

Visiting Angels® helps address falls risks through a Safe & Steady Fall Prevention that teaches seniors, families, and care providers how to make falls less likely by creating a safer home environment.

Contact us today! Our home care coordinators are available to discuss your senior's needs via a free home care consultation.