



### **What to Look for in a Short-Term Rehabilitation Stay**

There may come a time in your aging loved one's life where they may need to recover and regain their strength at a short-term rehabilitation facility. Whether it's a planned hip or knee replacement, or a sudden stroke or fall, rehabilitating at a short-term care facility has many benefits. Most hospitals are not designed and equipped for longer stays that do not involve



intensive care and monitoring. Staying unnecessarily longer in the hospital environment can also lead to an increased risk of infection. Short-term care rehabilitation facilities are designed to accommodate older adults in need of temporary assistance to get back up on their feet. They tend to offer a homier environment, making recovery more enjoyable and comfortable. Short-term care also provides families time to prepare their loved one's home environment for their safe return upon discharge. Many nursing homes or long-term care communities offer short-term rehabilitation stays, giving candidates for short-term care the choice of where they would like to pursue their rehabilitation. With many options available, here are a few pointers to consider when touring short-term rehabilitation communities and deciding which place is the best fit for your loved one.

#### **Private or Shared Rooms**

While most short-term care facilities offer private rooms for patients, some facilities may have a few rooms where having a roommate is possible, or two rooms may share an adjoining bathroom. During your tour, ask about the types of rooms where short-term care patients are assigned, and, if roommates are a possibility, what happens when your loved one doesn't get along with their roommate. Also ask to see a typical short-term care room during your tour and look for private bathrooms with a shower within the room

#### **Therapy Services Provided**

The most important reason that a hospital patient discharges to a short-term rehabilitation facility is to regain his or her strength and mobility. When touring short-term care facilities, be sure to ask about the specific therapy services they provide, and whether they specialize in anything particular. Some facilities may be better equipped to handle stroke patients, whereas others may specialize in joint replacements. Also ask about how often to expect therapy sessions, if there's flexibility in how they schedule patients, and how soon your loved one will be evaluated to begin therapy treatment. If your loved one is discharged from the hospital over the weekend, they may or may not be evaluated by a therapist until Monday.

#### **Bed Hold Policy**

If your loved one is scheduled to have elective surgery, such as a hip or knee replacement, you may have the advantage of touring and selecting the right short-term rehabilitation facility prior to surgery. If your loved one selects a facility where they feel most comfortable, ask the admissions coordinator about the facility's bed hold policy. Some facilities fill up more quickly than others and often take admissions on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you know your loved one's anticipated discharge date, ask the facility if they can hold a bed for your loved one and if there's a fee involved. Also ask about the

facility's bed hold policy should your loved one need to be readmitted to the hospital before they have been discharged from the rehabilitation facility.

### **Appearance of Current Patients**

While touring the facility, observe the appearance of current patients. Do the patients look happy, clean, and well-cared for? Observe the staff's interaction with patients and how quickly the staff respond to call lights or patient requests. Ask about nurse to patient and caregiver to patient ratios; do the nurses and caregivers seem overwhelmed, or do they appear to be able to manage the care load assigned to them? While touring, pay attention to odors as well. Remember that new doesn't always equal the best; it's the care that the staff provides that matters the most.

### **Activities Offered During Downtime**

Finally, ask what's available for your loved one during down time. Your loved one will receive therapy for a specific amount of time per day. After treatments, there may be a lot of unexpected down time. Your loved one may appreciate having little to do while recuperating or may be able to find ways to pass the time. However, most facilities offer activities for patients to pursue during their downtime. Ask to see an activity calendar and ask what's specifically offered for short-term stay patients. Is the activity department able to provide resources for short-term patients to use in their rooms, such as a DVD player, movies, books, newspaper, or other independent activities? Ask about out trip opportunities that your loved one may enjoy and how to arrange for your loved one to get involved.

[Visiting Angels of Denver](#) understands that recovering from a major surgery or illness can be a difficult process, especially for older adults. We proudly offer transitional care through our [Ready-Set-Go Home program](#). Your loved one will receive the care and support they need during their recovery period at home from our qualified caregivers. The type of care we offer through **Ready-Set-Go Home** plays a crucial role in helping your loved one avoid the risk of re-hospitalization. If your loved one is anticipating a discharge from a short-term rehabilitation stay and is in need of additional care and support while they transition, we are here for you. [Give us a call](#) so that we can learn more about your situation.

Visiting Angels of Denver and Boulder, CO

303-232-9999

[www.visitingangels.com/Denver](http://www.visitingangels.com/Denver)

[www.facebook.com/VisitingAngelsDenver](https://www.facebook.com/VisitingAngelsDenver)

[www.visitingangels.com/Longmont](http://www.visitingangels.com/Longmont)

[www.facebook.com/VisitingAngels.BoulderCounty](https://www.facebook.com/VisitingAngels.BoulderCounty)