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## Nursing Facility Levels of Care

The phrase “level of care” is used by regulators and third-party payers to describe the type and amount of care a nursing home resident requires. The level of care a patient needs is made by the admitting facility after reviewing information from the physician and nurses the patient has been evaluated by prior to admission. The level of care is based on several factors:

- **Medical needs** -How often one needs to be seen by a physician.
- **Nursing care needs** -What services must be provided by a RN, LPN or nursing assistant, Physical therapist/Occupational therapies, etc.
- **Personal care needs** -Assistance needed to complete activities of daily living.

**Skilled nursing care** is needed when the inherent complexity of service is such that it can be performed safely and/or effectively only by, or under, general supervision of licensed professionals and requires skilled services on a daily basis. Patient’s functional or medical complexity are such that outcome would be compromised with less than daily skilled services.



**Intermediate care** is ordered by, and provided under the direction of a physician. It is available on a continuous 24-hour basis to a person who does not require the degree of care and treatment provided in a hospital or skilled

nursing facility. Because of a mental or physical disability, the person does, however, require nursing and related health and medical services in the context of a planned program of health care and management. \*Medicare does not pay for this level of care in a facility.

**Custodial care** consists of any non-medical care that can reasonably and safely be provided by non-licensed caregivers, and involves help with daily activities like bathing and dressing (also known as activities of daily living or ADLs). Custodial care is often seen in Assisted Living facilities as described in the next paragraph. \*Medicare does not cover this level of care in a facility.

**Assisted living** is an option for individuals who have difficulty with daily activities (could be ADLs – activities of daily living; or IADLs – instrumental activities of daily living) at home. Assisted Living allows seniors to live an independent lifestyle, but also receive regular support for a range of daily activities from cleaning to meal preparation. Housekeeping and maintenance services are often included in the monthly rental of an apartment, along with laundry services, utilities, transportation and meals. Additional services can be requested such as medication management or assistance taking a shower.

**Independent living** is for individuals who can still live independently but enjoy having access to assistance when needed. Independent living communities provide their residents with convenient access to dining, medical care, entertainment, etc., while offering a safe living environment, but with minimal assistance. Hospitality services, such as housekeeping, meals, and laundry may or may not be included in the monthly rental, but are typically available.



**Email us** topics or specific questions that you would like us to cover.

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The following websites were referenced for this article:

<http://takingcareofmomanddad.net/nursinghomes/descriptionofservices/levelsofcare.html>

<https://provider.ghc.org/all-sites/clinical/criteria/pdf/snf.pdf>

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/Medicaid-Integrity-Education/Downloads/infograph-CustodialCarevsSkilledCare-%5BMarch-2016%5D.pdf>

<https://www.umh.org/assisted-independent-living-blog/bid/245242/the-difference-between-assisted-independent-living>

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/skilled-nursing-facility-care.html>



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