



Consumer to Consumer: Tips for Getting Good Care at a Nursing home

Being Proactive

This section gives you advice and recommendations from the experts – the people who are actually receiving care and services in a nursing home. Each of the individuals quoted below is a long-term care consumer who was interviewed and asked what suggestions they had about being proactive in a nursing home.

- **Be proactive:**
 - *The first few days in the nursing home can be very important. People form attitudes quickly. Put forth your best self.* -James
 - *Be tactful about how you say something. A sharp tone will make staff angry.* - Brian
 - *Read all the materials you signed at the time of your admission.* - James
 - *Know your rights. I was talking on my phone in my room one day when the nurse just opened the door and came right in. I pointed out that I had the right to privacy in my phone conversations and asked her to knock first.* – Brian
 - *Get to know the names of your aides and nurses. Help them get to know your likes, dislikes and needs. I told them that my mother comes to visit three days a week at 12:30 p.m. so I need to have all my care done before that time. They have accommodated my needs.* - Brian
 - *Be as kind and considerate to the aides as possible.* – Marilyn
 - *Get involved and make suggestions for improvements. I've made lots of suggestions to the activities director, who has acted on them.* - Brian
 - *Go to care plan meetings, especially if something is going on that you don't like. It helps if a family member can join you. If your care plan isn't scheduled for a while, talk with the Director of Nursing.* – Marilyn
 - *Speak up about your care. My care plan called for me to get a certain treatment twice a day, with one treatment at night after 8:00 p.m. But evening is the time I really get into researching things on my computer, and the treatment took away from my computer time. I asked if we could do a shorter version of the treatment at night, and they agreed.* - Brian

- *Practice what you preach. Be very appreciative of staff. Thank them for what they do. A thank you goes a long way. - James*
- *Reach out to staff and ask them how they are doing. - Brian*
- *Get to know management, like the Administrator or Director of Nursing. This has really helped me. For instance, if I'm having a problem, the Director of Nursing will take care of it because I have good rapport with her. – Brian*
- *Know what medications you're on and what they look like. Make sure to look at the medications in the cup when staff is giving them to you. If the medications look different or don't look right, question it. – Marilyn*
- *If you have family, get them involved. I see a real difference in the experience that people with family have. If you don't have family, make sure to have outside connections. – Howard*