

“My parents have been at Smith Crossing for over 6 months and thoroughly enjoy their new home – the staff, the residents, and their surroundings! My parents have been treated respectfully and with sincere care and concern. Knowing that my parents are in a safe and caring environment gives me great comfort and peace of mind.”

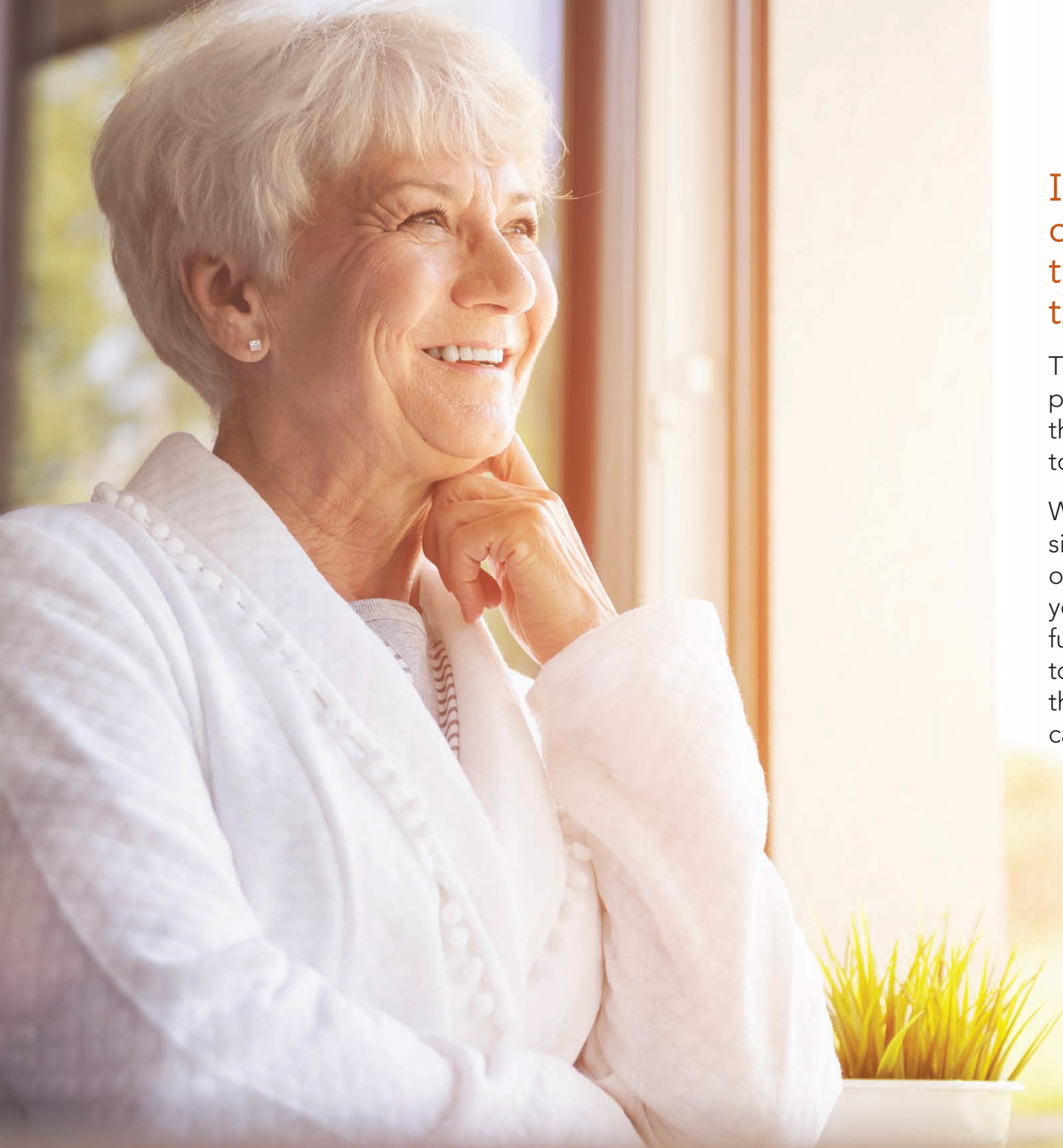
— Julie B., Child of Smith Crossing Residents



# TEN THINGS

# THINGS

THAT YOU NEED TO  
KNOW ABOUT YOUR  
AGING LOVED ONES



## Is your loved one still living on their own, but beginning to need a bit more help throughout the day?

Then now is the right time to begin planning for their future – while they're still independent and able to join in on the discussion.

Whether it is a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle – the fact is, 70% of people with an aging relative haven't yet talked with them about plans for future care. Here are some helpful tips to start the conversation and ensure that they will live safely, happily and cared for as they age.



## Understand your loved one's health status

How are they doing? 'Pretty good' isn't nearly specific enough. Your parents or relatives can be secretive about their health – afraid of burdening their family. That's why you should take a proactive role in staying informed:

Smith Crossing will perform a full health assessment for your loved one when they move in. With a full continuum of care available on campus, we can make sure their health needs will be met each and every day. And we'll keep you informed of any changes.

- ▶ Ask them for permission to talk to their doctors about their current situation and what additional care they may need in the future.
- ▶ Keep track of any incidents, such as falls, cuts, colds or memory lapses.
- ▶ How's their mobility and stability? Are they having trouble going up and down stairs? Are they comfortable using the shower? Falls become a serious health risk as we age, but they are preventable.
- ▶ It's important you know what medications they're taking and why. Make a list, including dosages, instructions and side effects. Are medications being taken as prescribed?
- ▶ Have copies of all current medical records and health insurance policies.
- ▶ Arrange with your loved one's neighbors and friends to keep you informed about any developments.
- ▶ Do they have instructions, such as a living will, to direct their future care?





## Understand your loved one's financial status

It's not that you're being nosy, but you'll need to be aware of, and have access to, information about their finances. You'll want to know what resources are available for future care before that need arises. Talk to them and get their approval to go over their finances:

At Smith Crossing, our residency counselors will work with you and your loved one to help find the right residence and level of care to fit their needs.



- ▶ Review retirement savings, assets (including home), Social Security, pensions and any other income.
- ▶ Determine if they have enough resources to cover any unexpected expenses and future care.
- ▶ Consider asking your loved one to give you durable power-of-attorney. If they become incapacitated, you'll be able to make important financial decisions on their behalf.
- ▶ Understand the value of a living trust. It can save your family time and money by avoiding probate.
- ▶ Gather important documents that you'll need for estate planning, including wills, tax returns, deeds, titles, accounts and life insurance policies.



## 3. Keep in contact with the rest of your family

Smith Crossing offers independent living, assisted living, memory support, and skilled nursing care to provide your loved one with the best care options for every stage of life.



The time to plan a family meeting is before your aging relative has a problem that requires immediate attention. You may face some resistance having this talk – no one likes to think about their relative getting old – but you need to make it a point that everyone has to be involved. By working together now, you'll avoid any discord or hard feelings later.

- ▶ Try having the first meeting in person, perhaps when those who live far away come in for a holiday.
- ▶ Prepare questions in advance so that the meeting stays on target.
- ▶ Stay calm. Family dynamics can cause the conversation to become heated or highly emotional. It's a stressful subject.
- ▶ Agree to who will be the primary "voice" for your loved one. Everyone should agree to shoulder some responsibilities, so that no one takes on too much of a burden.
- ▶ Listen. It's normal to have different perspectives on such an important issue. Be willing to consider the other side.
- ▶ Communication is key when working with your family. Be sure to continue to stay in touch and provide regular updates.



## Caring for your aging relative can be very stressful

Looking after them is a giant role reversal, and they may feel frustrated that they need to rely on you. Your relationship may become strained. We all experience stress in our lives from time to time, but the stress of looking after your loved one as they age can become overwhelming.

When your aging relative decides a lifestyle change is in order, not only will they enjoy a rewarding life at Smith Crossing, but you'll be able to relax, knowing they're in good hands.

- ▶ Be aware of symptoms of stress, such as headaches, indigestion, poor concentration, sleep difficulties, anxiety and irritability.
- ▶ Consider joining a caregiver support group.
- ▶ Stay connected with family and friends. They can provide emotional support and keep you grounded.
- ▶ Take steps to stay healthy: Establish a good sleep routine, stay physically active and maintain a balanced diet.
- ▶ Take regular time off to relax and enjoy your favorite activities.





## 5. Understand the importance of socialization

Social connections are central to our physical and mental well-being. But for older adults living at home, it can be difficult to maintain these vital social relationships. Illness, loss of friends or loved ones, lack of mobility and other issues can result in isolation and lead to depression and physical decline.

The good news is that increasing social interaction enhances health – reducing cognitive problems, lowering blood pressure, improving heart health, easing depression and enhancing quality of life.

- ▶ Plan outings and meals with friends and family.
- ▶ Encourage a regular routine outside the home, such as shopping, walks and visiting friends.
- ▶ Consider a community like Smith Crossing. Studies show that living in a high-quality senior living community provides greater socialization and a higher quality of life than living at home.

Smith Crossing provides exceptional opportunities to socialize, including engaging programming, cultural events, resident clubs and outings.





## The difference between independent and assisted living

Residents needing a little extra help can enjoy the same maintenance-free lifestyle as residents in independent living, with the added benefit of a personalized care plan, access to licensed nurses and CNAs 24/7, and assistance with administered medication.

As your loved one ages, they're likely to begin needing more daily assistance than you can easily provide. Although they might not be struggling with certain tasks, such as bathing and cooking, they may be tired of home maintenance. At this stage, a move to an independent living community may be the solution. They can enjoy a maintenance-free residence, make new friends and enjoy an active lifestyle.

If they are still largely independent but begin to need help with what are called "activities of daily living" (ADLs) – such as bathing, dressing, and managing medication – it's time to look at assisted living. It is a great long-term senior care option, but not all communities are the same:

- ▶ Smaller assisted living facilities may be licensed to provide only basic assistance. Others may focus on skilled care – which is a poor fit for more active seniors.
- ▶ Stand-alone facilities may require them to move out if their care needs escalate.
- ▶ Life Plan Communities, such as Smith Crossing, offer assisted living as part of a full continuum of care, which also includes memory care, skilled nursing care and short-term rehab. Your loved one can age in place.

It's important to do your research and visit different communities before you decide as a family what the right fit will be.







## 7. What if your loved one requires more care?

You want to be sure they continue receiving the care they need as they age. In choosing a community, you should not only look at what your loved one needs now, but assess how that community can meet their future needs.

These are the questions you should ask:

- ▶ Will my loved one benefit from a Life Plan Community or a rental community?
- ▶ How many levels of care are available? Life Plan Communities typically offer assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing care and short-term rehabilitation.
- ▶ Are there services that the community cannot provide?
- ▶ Are all services covered with one monthly fee?
- ▶ What is the ratio of staff to residents? Are licensed nurses and CNAs on-site 24/7?
- ▶ What is the process of transitioning to higher levels of care? How much will the monthly costs increase? What if they require more care? Will they have to leave the community?



As a not-for-profit Life Plan Community, Smith Crossing works with families to personalize a care program, so their loved ones can enjoy a rewarding life today with a secure plan to meet their needs as they age.



## Who will provide care for them?

When you tour a community, meeting the staff is essential. They're going to be interacting with your loved ones. Talking with them will give you a better idea of the quality of care you can expect.

Here are some of the questions to ask:

- ▶ Are there full-time licensed practical nurses (LPNs) on-site around the clock?
- ▶ Do residents have access to an on-call physician?
- ▶ How many employees are dedicated to helping residents on a daily basis? How many are available at night?
- ▶ What background checks are conducted on prospective employees?
- ▶ During your tour, observe how the staff interacts with residents. Are they helpful and friendly? How many staff members are providing care during your visit?



At Smith Crossing, our staff is highly trained and credentialed. They get to know residents on a personal level, building friendships and learning the ins and outs of their daily lives. This one-on-one approach ensures a well-rounded and personalized level of care.



## What to look for when choosing a living option

Finding the right community for your loved one is a challenging but ultimately rewarding experience. You want to find a community that fits their needs as well as their personality. It's important to be prepared so that you're not overwhelmed with choices.

Here are some things to do when conducting your search:

- ▶ Take a tour. Is the community clean and its facilities up-to-date? Stay for a meal, and observe scheduled activities.
- ▶ Is leadership visible to residents and visitors? Do they take time to interact with you?
- ▶ Learn what services and activities are available.
- ▶ Ask about security and staffing, particularly at night.
- ▶ Put yourself in the place of your loved one. Will they like the food? Are people friendly? Will they feel at home?

You can count on our leadership and staff to always be accessible. Smith Crossing consistently earns high praise from residents and families.





## Contact Smith Crossing to learn more and to schedule your visit

Our friendly residency counselors are ready to talk with you and your loved one and answer all of your questions. They'll be happy to schedule a personalized tour and also prepare a plan that meets your relative's needs and timing.

**Call 708-590-4588 x2308**



Established in 2004

**Built on a century of service**

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