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YOUR CHOOSING A RETIREMENT HOME KIT · NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Sample: Choosing a retirement home with Margaret

Understand the options, tour with confidence, and compare homes side by side.

FOR YOUR SITUATION

From your answers, these matter most when comparing homes for Margaret:

- Medication help: who manages medications, and how
- Meals: how many are included, and special diets
- Activities and company: what happens each week, and how new residents are welcomed
- Getting around: accessibility, transport to appointments, and walking aids
- Location: how close it is to family, for visits

This kit is practical guidance, not legal or financial advice. Check details with each home, the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (rhra.ca), Ontario Health atHome or ontario.ca. In an emergency, call 911.

Understanding the options

Staying at home, with more help

Publicly funded home care is arranged through Ontario Health atHome (call 310-2222, no area code needed, seven days a week), and can be topped up with private help.

- Often the first choice.
- Works best with reliable help and someone checking in.

A retirement home

Private homes, paid for by the resident, with meals, activities and a choice of care services.

- Every retirement home in Ontario must be licensed. Check the public register at rhra.ca, which shows services and inspection reports.
- Care levels and costs vary a lot between homes.

Long-term care

For people who need nursing care and help around the clock. You apply through Ontario Health atHome (call 310-2222, no area code needed, seven days a week), which checks eligibility.

- The province sets the accommodation costs each year; they're the same in every home.
- A rate reduction may be available for a basic room. See ontario.ca.
- There can be waits, so it helps to plan ahead.

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Before you tour

- [ ] Talk with Margaret about what matters most: location, room size, meals, activities, pets.
- [ ] Look each home up on the public register at rhra.ca.
- [ ] Ask each home for its information package and price list in writing.
- [ ] Plan to visit at a mealtime, and bring Margaret if possible.

On the tour

Tick what you see. Trust your first impressions.

- [ ] Residents look comfortable, and staff greet them by name.
- [ ] It's clean, bright and free of strong smells.
- [ ] Hallways and bathrooms are easy to get around, with grab bars and call bells.
- [ ] The rooms available fit the furniture and routines that matter most.
- [ ] Try a meal: is it appetizing, and are special diets handled?
- [ ] There's an activity calendar, and residents are actually taking part.
- [ ] Ask how staff respond to a call bell, day and night.
- [ ] Ask what happens in an emergency, and who's on duty overnight.

Questions about costs and care

- [ ] What's included in the monthly cost? What costs extra?
- [ ] What care is offered (for example medication help, bathing, dressing), and how is each priced?
- [ ] How often do prices go up, and with how much notice?
- [ ] Are there deposits, or one-time fees to move in?
- [ ] What happens if care needs increase? When would a resident need to move?
- [ ] How much notice is needed to move out?
- [ ] Can residents bring in their own private care worker?

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Compare up to three homes

Type or write your notes in each box.

	Home 1	Home 2	Home 3
Name, address and phone			
Licensed? (rhra.ca)			
Monthly cost			
What's included			
Care offered, and costs			
Room size and feel			
Meals			
Activities			
Staff and atmosphere			
Distance from family			
Margaret's impression			
Our impression			

Red flags

- Pressure to sign or pay a deposit on the first visit.
- Prices or care costs that aren't given in writing.
- Not licensed, or recent serious inspection findings on the register.
- Residents who seem ignored, or staff who seem rushed or unhappy.
- Vague answers about what happens when care needs change.

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Moving checklist

- [ ] Plan the move with Margaret, at a pace that works.
- [ ] Measure the new room, and choose favourite furniture and photos first.
- [ ] Update the address with the bank, pension, health card and mail.
- [ ] Arrange the pharmacy, and make sure the home has the medication list.
- [ ] Label clothes and belongings.
- [ ] Plan visits for the first few weeks; settling in takes time.

For the bigger picture, a Personalized Family Plan covers every area of Margaret's life, with checked local services, reviewed by a care navigator. senestro.ca/pricing