

Choosing a Rehabilitation Unit/CARF



Choosing a rehab facility

Rehabilitation (rehab) services are provided in many different places, including:

- Acute care and rehab hospitals
- Subacute facilities
- Long-term care facilities
- In the home by home health agencies
- Hospitals
- Inpatient rehab centers
- Outpatient rehab centers
- Community health settings
- Private practice
- Schools
- Industrial health centers
- Veterans Affairs medical centers
- Military health care centers

Here are some general questions to ask when trying to choose rehab facilities and services:

- Does my insurance company have a preferred rehab provider that I must use to qualify for payment of services?
- What is the cost? Will my insurance company cover all or part of the cost?
- How far away is the facility? What is the family visiting policy?
- What are the admission criteria?
- What are the qualifications of the facility? Is the facility accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)?
- Is the facility well-maintained, clean, and safe?
- Has the facility handled treatment for this type of condition before?
- What are the staff's credentials?
- Is therapy scheduled every day? How many hours a day?
- Is a qualified physical therapist on staff and involved in plan of care and treatments?
- What rehab team members are available for treatment? How is the patient and family included in planning care?

- What type of patient and family education and support is available?
- Is there a healthcare provider onsite 24 hours a day?
- How are emergencies handled?
- What type of discharge planning and assistance is available?
- What can be done if care is unsatisfactory?

Important points about rehab programs

- **Exercise is key.** A rehab program should have supervised exercise training at least twice a week. This should include endurance training, interval training, resistance and strength training, upper and lower limbs, and walking exercise. Flexibility, muscle training, and neuromuscular electrical stimulation can also be included.
- **Look for a customized approach.** Rehab treatments should be customized for each person. This helps to achieve the best personal functional gains. A customized approach can be done in different types of rehab settings.
- **Community-based and home-based programs.** If the frequency and intensity of the programs are the same, community-based and home-based rehab programs are as effective as hospital-based programs.
- **Programs for COPD.** For people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a traditional pulmonary rehab program with supervision is the most effective option. If someone with COPD is unable to go to a traditional program, then home-based exercise is an option. But it may be less effective.
- **Help at home for shortness of breath.** Standardized home-based pulmonary rehab programs improve shortness of breath (dyspnea) in people with COPD.

What is CARF?

CARF stands for Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. It's a private, not-for-profit organization that accredits rehab programs with some of the following services:

- Adult day services
- Assisted living
- Behavioral health services
- Medical rehab

CARF helps to promote and assure standards of quality for these programs. It focuses on optimal outcomes for people served.

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