VILLAGE FOREST

CARE COTTAGE

Navigating the Journey to Assisted Living

A practical, caring guide for families considering assisted living or memory care for someone they love

Village Forest Care Cottage · Rosenberg & Needville, Texas



WELCOME

You don't have to do this alone

If you are reading this, you are probably worried about a parent or another person you love. Maybe something happened that made you stop and think. Maybe it has been building for a while. Either way, it is normal to feel unsure, tired, or even guilty.

This guide is meant to make the road ahead a little clearer. It walks through the signs that more support may help, the kinds of care available, how families pay for care, what to ask when you tour, and how to make the move as gentle as possible. It also includes printable checklists you can take with you.

Every family's situation is different, and there is no single "right time." Take what is useful, skip what isn't, and lean on the people and resources around you. Your loved one's doctor, a social worker, and the agencies listed in this guide can all help you make the decisions that fit your family.

We are Village Forest Care Cottage, a family-owned assisted living and memory care provider with two small cottage homes in Fort Bend County, one in Rosenberg and one in Needville. We wrote this guide for any family in our community, whether or not you ever choose us.

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With warmth,
The Village Forest Care Cottage family

PART 01

Signs it may be time

Changes often show up slowly, and they are easy to explain away. Looking at the whole picture can help. Here are common signs families notice.

SAFETY

At home and on the road

- Falls, near-falls, or unexplained bruises
- Leaving the stove on, doors unlocked, or water running
- New dents or scrapes on the car; getting lost while driving
- Missed, doubled, or confused medications
- Being targeted by scams or unusual phone calls

DAILY TASKS

Everyday routines

- Trouble bathing, dressing, or using the bathroom
- Weight loss, spoiled food, or skipped meals
- Unpaid bills or piles of unopened mail
- A home that is much less tidy than it used to be
- Wearing the same clothes for days

MEMORY & MOOD

Thinking and feeling

- Repeating questions or stories more often
- Confusion about time, place, or familiar people
- Wandering, or restlessness late in the day
- Pulling away from friends, hobbies, or outings
- New anxiety, sadness, or irritability

THE CAREGIVER

How you are doing

- You are exhausted, or your sleep is often interrupted
- Your own health, work, or family is suffering
- You feel resentful, then guilty for feeling that way
- Care needs have grown past what you can safely give
- You worry constantly when you are not there

A gentle next step: One sign on its own does not mean a move is needed. If you notice several, or if they are increasing, schedule a visit with your loved one's doctor. Some memory and mood changes have treatable causes, such as infections, medication side effects, or vitamin deficiencies, so start with a checkup.

PART 02

Types of care, explained

The right setting depends on how much help is needed, how often, and what matters most to your loved one.

STAY AT HOME

In-home care

Caregivers visit the home for a few hours or more to help with personal care, meals, light housekeeping, and companionship. Home health (skilled nursing or therapy ordered by a doctor) is a separate service. In-home care works well when needs are predictable and someone is available the rest of the time.

HOMELIKE SUPPORT

Assisted living

A residence with staff available around the clock to help with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, meals, and medications, while residents keep as much independence as possible. Settings range from large apartment-style buildings to small, residential homes with only a few residents.

DEMENTIA CARE

Memory care

Care designed for people living with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia. Look for a secure environment, staff trained in dementia care, a calm routine, and activities matched to each person's abilities. Memory care may be its own community or part of an assisted living home.

MEDICAL CARE

Nursing home

Also called a skilled nursing facility. Licensed nurses are on duty 24 hours a day for people with complex medical needs, people who are mostly bedbound, or people recovering after a hospital stay. Short-term rehab stays and long-term care are both common.

How Texas licenses assisted living

In Texas, assisted living facilities are licensed by Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) as **Type A** or **Type B**, based on residents' ability to leave the building in an emergency and whether they need help at night.

- **Type A:** residents can evacuate without staff help, can follow directions in an emergency, and do not need routine care during nighttime sleeping hours.
- **Type B:** residents may need staff help to evacuate, may need care during the night, may not be able to follow directions in an emergency, and may need help moving to and from a wheelchair (but are not permanently bedfast).
- A facility that advertises specialized Alzheimer's or dementia care should also hold an **Alzheimer's certification** from HHSC.

Tip: Ask any home which license it holds and look it up yourself in HHSC's Long-term Care Provider Search at apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch.

PART 03

Talking with your loved one

This conversation is rarely a single talk. Think of it as a series of honest, loving conversations that give your parent time to think and a real voice in the decision.

Before you talk

- **Get on the same page as family.** Siblings and other close family members should agree on the main concerns first, so your loved one isn't caught in the middle.
- **Pick a calm time and a quiet place.** Avoid holidays, busy gatherings, or the hours right after a crisis or a hard day.
- **Know a few options.** Having visited a home or two makes the idea feel real and less frightening.

During the conversation

- **Lead with love and specifics.** Share what you have noticed and why you worry, using "I" statements rather than blame.
- **Listen more than you speak.** Ask what they fear losing, such as independence, privacy, a pet, or a daily routine. Their answers show you what matters.
- **Offer real choices.** Which home to tour, which room, which furniture to bring. Choices protect dignity.
- **Invite a trusted voice.** A doctor, a longtime friend, or a social worker can sometimes say what is hard to hear from a son or daughter.
- **Keep it short, and plan to come back to it.** It is fine to stop and try again another day.

Words that help

"I want you to be safe, and I want you to have help so our time together can be about us, not chores."

"Would you be willing to come with me and just look? No decisions today."

"What would make a new place feel like home to you?"

Words to avoid

"You can't take care of yourself anymore."

"We've already decided."

"It's just like a hotel." (Be honest; this is a real change.)

If memory loss is involved: Long explanations can cause stress for someone living with dementia. Keep it simple, focus on feelings and reassurance, and consider involving their doctor. The goal is comfort, not winning an argument.

PART 04

Paying for care

Most families use a combination of sources. Here is a general overview to help you start the conversation. Rules and amounts change, so always confirm the details with each program.

Private pay

Many families pay from savings, retirement income, Social Security, pensions, or proceeds from selling or renting a home. Some families also share costs among siblings, or ask a financial advisor about options such as using the value of a life insurance policy. Ask every home exactly what the monthly rate includes, what costs extra, and how and when rates can change.

Long-term care insurance

If your loved one has a policy, find it now and call the insurer. Ask whether it covers assisted living and memory care, what the daily or monthly benefit is, whether there is a waiting (elimination) period, and what paperwork is needed. Many policies begin paying when a person needs help with a certain number of daily activities or has a cognitive impairment.

VA Aid and Attendance

Veterans who served during a wartime period, and surviving spouses, may qualify for an extra monthly payment added to a VA pension when they need help with daily activities. Service, income, and net worth rules apply. A county Veterans Service Officer or another VA-accredited representative can help you apply at no charge. VA benefits line: 1-800-827-1000.

What about Medicare?

Medicare generally does not pay for assisted living or for long-term help with daily activities. It may cover doctor visits, hospital care, some short-term skilled care, and prescriptions (through Part D) while your loved one lives in assisted living.

Get organized: gather copies in one folder

- Recent bank and retirement account statements
- Social Security and pension income letters
- Long-term care and life insurance policies
- Military discharge papers (DD-214), if a veteran
- Medicare and supplemental insurance cards
- Power of attorney and advance directives
- A list of monthly bills and expenses
- Names and phone numbers of advisors

Please verify eligibility. This page is general information, not legal or financial advice. Confirm details with the insurer or program, a VA-accredited representative, a financial advisor, or an elder law attorney.

Touring checklist

Bring this page to every home you visit. Visit more than once if you can, including at a mealtime.

Home: _____ Date of visit: _____

License & care

- [ ] What type of license do you hold (Type A or B)? Are you Alzheimer's certified?
- [ ] How do you assess a new resident and create a care plan? How often is it updated?
- [ ] How are medications managed and given?
- [ ] What needs can you *not* meet? When would someone need to move?
- [ ] How do you handle falls, illness, and emergencies? Who contacts family?

Staff

- [ ] How many caregivers are on duty during the day? At night? Are they awake overnight?
- [ ] What training do caregivers receive, including dementia care?
- [ ] How long have most staff members worked here?
- [ ] Is there a nurse involved in care? How often?

Daily life

- [ ] What does a typical day look like? May I see an activity calendar?
- [ ] Can residents keep their own routines for waking, meals, and bedtime?
- [ ] Can I see a weekly menu? How are special diets handled?
- [ ] Is there safe outdoor space residents can enjoy?

Costs & contract

- [ ] What is included in the monthly rate? What costs extra?
- [ ] Are there move-in fees or deposits? Are any refundable?
- [ ] How much notice do you give before a rate increase?
- [ ] How is billing handled? Will you provide statements for insurance claims?
- [ ] May I take a copy of the contract home to review?

Family & communication

- [ ] What are visiting hours? Can family join for meals?
- [ ] How will you keep us updated, and who is my main contact?
- [ ] Can residents bring their own furniture? Pets?

What to notice

- [ ] Do staff greet residents by name, with warmth and patience?
- [ ] Do residents look clean, comfortable, and engaged?
- [ ] Does the home smell fresh and look well kept?
- [ ] Are hallways, bathrooms, and showers safe and accessible?
- [ ] Could I picture my loved one here?

Notes

PART 06

Making the move

Packing list

Check with the home first about room size, what is provided, and anything not allowed. Label everything with your loved one's name.

- [ ] About a week of comfortable, easy-on clothing and sleepwear
- [ ] Supportive non-slip shoes and slippers
- [ ] A sweater or light jacket for cool rooms
- [ ] Toiletries and personal care items
- [ ] Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, plus chargers and cases
- [ ] Walker, cane, or wheelchair
- [ ] Current medication list and doctor orders the home requests
- [ ] Copies of ID, insurance cards, and important documents (power of attorney, advance directives)
- [ ] A favorite chair, quilt, or bedspread
- [ ] Family photos and a few treasured keepsakes
- [ ] Familiar items: a radio, books, puzzles, a hobby kit
- [ ] A large-print calendar and clock

The first weeks

- **Set up the room before they arrive** if you can, so it feels familiar from the first moment.
- **Share their story.** Tell staff about routines, favorite foods, past work, hobbies, and what calms or upsets them.
- **Expect an adjustment period.** Settling in can take several weeks, sometimes longer. Ups and downs are normal.
- **Visit, but follow the staff's lead.** Some people settle faster with frequent short visits; others need a little space at first.
- **Keep goodbyes simple and warm.** "I'll see you Tuesday" is better than a long, emotional farewell.
- **Stay in touch with the team.** Ask questions early and share what you notice.



A private bedroom at our Rosenberg cottage.

Leave at home: valuables, heirloom jewelry, and large amounts of cash. Ask the home about its policy for personal belongings, and keep a simple list of what you bring, with photos of anything special.

PART 07

Caring for yourself

Caring for someone you love is a lot. Asking for help is part of loving well. A move to assisted living doesn't end your role. It lets you return to being a son, daughter, or spouse.

- **Let go of guilt.** Choosing good care is an act of love, not a failure.
- **Protect the basics.** Sleep, meals, movement, and your own medical appointments matter.
- **Accept help.** When someone offers, give them a specific task.
- **Take a break.** Respite care, adult day programs, or a short stay elsewhere can give you time to rest.
- **Find your people.** Caregiver support groups, in person or online, remind you that you are not alone.
- **Allow yourself to grieve.** Watching a parent change is hard, especially with memory loss. Talk with a counselor if sadness lingers.



The sunroom at our Needville cottage.

Helpful resources

- **Texas 2-1-1:** dial 2-1-1 for local services, benefits, and caregiver support.
- **HHSC Long-term Care Provider Search:** apps.hhs.texas.gov/LTCSearch (check a facility's license and inspection history).
- **Texas Long-term Care Ombudsman:** 1-800-252-2412, free advocates for residents' rights.
- **Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline:** 1-800-272-3900 · alz.org
- **Eldercare Locator:** 1-800-677-1116 · eldercare.acl.gov
- **VA benefits:** 1-800-827-1000 · va.gov

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WE'D LOVE TO MEET YOU

Visit us

Village Forest Care Cottage is a family-owned assisted living and memory care provider with two small cottage homes in Fort Bend County. Come see them, ask your questions, and get a feel for daily life. Every family is welcome.



Rosenberg Cottage

3200 Avenue N
Rosenberg, TX 77471

(346) 840-2155



Needville Cottage

7306 Welch Ct
Needville, TX 77461 · on 2.6 acres

(281) 755-8702

Schedule a tour

Call either cottage or book online. We're glad to help, even if you're just starting to look.

vfcottage.com/schedule-a-tour

vfcottage.com

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