

5 Reasons to Make Your CCRC Move Sooner Than Later

For many seniors who are currently residing in their own home but like the idea of living in a setting where healthcare services are available if needed down the road, a continuing care retirement community (CCRC, or life plan community) is the perfect solution.

But when is the right time to move to a CCRC? What is the ideal age?

Unfortunately, there is no one answer to this question because everyone's situation will be different. People age at different rates, and different lifestyles impact the aging process. The *average* age of new CCRC residents is in the early 80s, but this varies depending on the community, location, and other factors.

Some people have concerns about moving "too soon," but for those who feel they aren't old enough for a CCRC, a word of caution: Waiting *too* long to make a move to a CCRC can mean missing out on some of the very reasons people are attracted to these communities in the first place.

The advantages of making your move

If you think a CCRC is right for you, but you feel like you aren't old enough to move to one yet, here are five reasons why you may want to consider moving sooner rather than later:

1. **Involvement:** One of the top benefits of living in a CCRC is having convenient access to a huge array of activities, amenities, and services. Many of these perks take place on-site in the community, but more and more CCRCs are offering ways for residents to stay involved in their broader

community as well, via intergenerational programs, volunteer service projects, continuing education classes, and more. Moving when you are younger allows you to enjoy and benefit from these events and activities.

2. **Wellness:** While CCRCs do offer residents a continuum of care services if and when they are needed, it is their goal to help residents stay healthy and living independently for as long as possible. That's why they provide comprehensive health and wellness programs, which may include access to fitness trainers, low-impact aerobics and yoga classes, fitness and aquatic centers, and special diet meal plans, just to list a few examples.
3. **Relationships:** CCRC residents often say that one of the greatest things about making the move to their community has been the friendships they've formed with other residents. This network of close, supportive friends can be especially beneficial should healthcare issues arise in the future. Those who wait too long to make their CCRC move may miss out on the opportunity to develop these meaningful relationships.

4. **Qualifying:** Continuing care contracts typically stipulate that new residents must be able to live independently when they first move into the community, and many CCRCs require a health evaluation of prospective residents as a part of their application process. Applicants who do not meet the community's new resident health standards can be declined, thus missing out on the numerous benefits offered by a CCRC, including access to a full continuum of care services.
5. **Smoother transition:** Moving tends to get increasingly difficult as we age—both physically and mentally. Those who are younger (relatively speaking), able-bodied, and in good health are generally able to handle the transition more easily. On the other hand, those who are older and frailer when they make a move may be more likely to experience relocation stress syndrome (RSS), a condition characterized by symptoms like anxiety, confusion, and loneliness.

Timing is everything

When is the right time to move to a CCRC? There are many considerations that must go into your individual answer to this question. But generally speaking, once you have determined that a CCRC is the right senior living option for you, it is smart to make the move while you still in good health and have the physical and emotional stamina to make a change and enjoy the benefits.