



E-Guide on How to Choose Skilled vs. Unskilled Home Care



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and the highest level of independence possible.**



Home Care Companies serve the community in a variety of ways including skilled and unskilled home care needs. Utter the words “Home Care” and something different may enter the mind of the listener depending on their past experiences and what they may have heard.

Home Care can include skilled care such as skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Home care can also indicate unskilled care such as certified nursing assistant care for activities of daily living or sitter service. Determining what services are needed can seem like a daunting task. This e-Guide can start the conversation in determining the level of care needed.

Skilled Home Health Care is typically needed following an acute illness or exacerbation of an illness and includes one of the following services:

- Skilled Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Social work (occasionally)

These services typically follow a hospital stay but can become engaged if a client becomes debilitated or develops a need such as a wound that requires wound care.

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A few injuries/illnesses that benefit from Skilled Home Health Care Services include:

- New Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) or SCI that have been rehospitalized for secondary diagnosis and with changes for debilitation
- New Traumatic Brain Injury following discharge from the hospital
- New Traumatic Burn following discharge from the hospital, post - reconstructive surgery or secondary diagnosis
- Discharge from the hospital following amputation and with new prosthesis for therapy
- Discharge following birth of cerebral palsy child and/or during development for therapy
- Discharge home following multi-trauma injury and/or following development of secondary diagnosis
- Brachial plexus following reconstructive surgery

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Home Health Unskilled Care

Unskilled Home Health Care is typically beneficial for long-term illness but can be beneficial for short-term illness as well and can include the following services:

- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Sitter or companion service

These services can be used in conjunction with skilled services, however they are typically known as chronic long-term care for individuals who cannot manage their own activities of daily living and/or are not safe to be alone.

To determine which level of unskilled care is needed, an individual evaluation of the client's function is required. Each state determines what is within the "scope" of a Certified Nursing Assistant's skill level vs. a sitter/companion service skill level.

1. Unskilled sitter or companion services: This level is generally what it implies: Companion only. If the client requires assistance with a bath or other activities of daily living, they would benefit from a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) also known as attendant care.
2. Unskilled Certified Nursing Assistant services: Although this level requires a state certification, the skill level is limited to personal care (i.e. assistance with a bath, dressing, meal preparation, and perhaps light housekeeping).

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When determining whether Home Care is a consideration for a client, the Home Care Professional often takes the following into consideration:

1. Is the client safe in their home? (cognitively, functionally, decision making ability, etc.)
2. Can the client perform their activities of daily living without assistance?
3. Can the client transport themselves to physician appointments, errands, church, etc.?
4. Can the client prepare a light meal if needed?
5. Can the client ambulate in their own environment safely to all needed areas? (i.e. restroom, kitchen, exits, etc.)
6. Can the client use the phone, call 911 and would they if necessary? (speaks to ability and cognition)



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Clients that would benefit from Unskilled Home Health Care:

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal cord injury
- Bedbound clients
- Multi-trauma clients
- Cognitively impaired clients



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Your client's Nurse Case Manager can identify a need for Home Care and then assist in finding the right Home Care Agency for your client.

Your new/existing client will benefit from Case Management if:

- Have your client's insurance and benefits been maximized for their medical needs?
- Do you have a client with large medical demands and a limited/modest Trust?
- Does your client struggle to obtain their medications?
- Does your client struggle to get in/out of their home?
- Does your client require durable medical equipment (DME) and/or medical supplies?
- Could your client benefit from a modified vehicle?
- Does your client struggle to manage their physician appointments?
- Does your client struggle to complete their normal activities of daily living?
- Does your client have the ability to attend church, visit family, or travel as they wish?

If your client has two or more of the above needs, they will benefit from a Nurse Case Manager.

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Cates Consulting Group is in the business of restoring dignity within the client's circumstances, hope for a new future, self-worth as their sense of value often has been lost, and the highest level of independence possible because people generally want to do as much as possible for themselves.

After interviewing thousands of clients over 20 plus years as a Registered Nurse and Case Manager, client after client typically want the same things...They Want to Restore Normal!

"Although Normal will be New, it doesn't mean Normal can't be found."

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