

Important Criteria to Consider When Choosing a Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Center

Choosing a rehabilitation center after a spinal cord injury or paralysis is one of the most important decisions you can make. Not all facilities are equal, and there are key factors that can contribute to optimal recovery and restoration. Here are the top ten criteria to consider when choosing a rehabilitation center.

1. Is the center's goal to promote lifelong

restoration? The goal of the rehabilitation center should be to develop a home-based, life-long restoration rehabilitation program tailored to each patient.

2. Does the center accept Medicaid and Medicare?

The rehabilitation center should accept federal Medicare, state Medicaid, and commercial insurance. Contracts with these programs indicate that the program has met the requirements for a national standard of care.

3. Does the center have an onsite physician?

The rehabilitation center should have physician oversight and onsite physician presence to integrate rehabilitation medicine with therapy. Physical and occupational therapy, along with simultaneous rehabilitative medical management, optimizes recovery.

4. Does the center have experienced physical and occupational therapists? The rehabilitation center should include the use of highly trained, certified physical and occupational therapists with multiple years of experience treating those with spinal cord injury.

5. Does the center provide one-to-one therapies?

The rehabilitation center should provide a one-to-one ratio of therapists to clients. Therapists should work directly with the individual patient during all scheduled therapy times, to maximize the benefits of therapy and ensure proper therapeutic techniques are followed.

6. Does the center offer multiple, integrated therapy modalities? The rehabilitation program should include an experienced interdisciplinary team that includes licensed therapists, physicians, nurses, nurse care managers, social workers, and other highly trained health professionals who are able to recognize, and appropriately treat, concerns and problems that may arise.

7. Is onsite, aquatic therapy offered?

The rehabilitation center should offer aquatic therapy treatment with trained aquatic therapists onsite.

8. Are important diagnostic services available and accessible? The rehabilitation center should offer access to services and assessments that help ensure the safe provision of therapy, including:

- Bone densitometry
- Urodynamic studies
- Evaluation of blood for critical factors
- X-ray
- CT/MRI
- EMG/NCS – electrophysiological studies

9. Does the center track and publish their patient outcomes? The rehabilitation center should have a process for tracking multiple outcome measures that contribute to a national database. Tracking outcomes not only allows individuals to understand their quantitative recovery, but also contributes to the science of restoration therapy at a national level.

10. Are care, schedules and appointments coordinated for the patient? The rehabilitation center should have an active patient/customer relationship program to ensure that treatment is seamless and that patients have continuity of care and communication across a lifetime.

For more information, visit SpinalCordRecovery.org, call **888-923-9222** or email Info.Sci@SpinalCordRecovery.org.

