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OLDER DRIVERS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Most older drivers are safe and benefit from a lifetime of driving experience. However, declining vision, flexibility and reactions can take a toll.

What can I do to compensate?

- Wear your glasses. Take care of them, and replace lost or broken ones.
- See your eye doctor every year.
- Avoid driving at dawn, dusk and night.
- Keep windshield, mirrors and headlights clean.
- Stretching exercises and walking programs can enhance overall fitness.
- Talk to a doctor about pain or stiffness in arms, feet, legs or neck.
- Always, always buckle up. It's the single most effective thing anyone can do to reduce the risk of injury and death in a crash.

When should I stop driving?

Keep alert to changes. Listen to those around you. Some of the following might indicate that you should cut back or stop driving altogether.

- Do passengers in your car seem to offer more suggestions than they used to?
- Are relatives worried about your driving?
- Do you get lost in neighborhoods that used to be easy to navigate?
- Has a police officer cautioned you about your driving?
- Have you gotten tickets for moving violations?
- Have you had near misses or crashes in the last three years?
- Has a health care provider told you to stop driving?
- Have neighbors or friends expressed concern?
- Are there new dents or dings in the car?

What are signs that an older driver is losing important skills?

The American Geriatrics Society lists the following warning signs as hallmarks of an unsafe driver:

- Running stop signs or red lights without noticing.
- Stopping at green lights for no reason.
- Narrowly missing pedestrians or cars without realizing it.
- Switching lanes or merging without looking.
- Going the wrong way on one-way streets.
- Getting lost in familiar areas.
- Stopping in a middle of intersections.
- Mixing up gas and brake pedals.



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How can I persuade a parent to stop driving?

- Express your concern. Gather feedback from other relatives and neighbors that may have observed their driving.
- Ask them to take a driving test: Many communities have several options for this, including the local division of motor vehicles, rehab centers, etc. AAA and AARP offer workbooks and self-assessment tests.
- Suggest a refresher course.
- Offer rides or run errands for them.
- Talk to the family physician, who can conduct a thorough medical and medication review. Doctors may write a prescription which restricts driving and can also send a report to the state-licensing agency.
- Research alternate transportation. Identify options that keep the senior in charge of decisions about how they get around?options like walking, bus, car pooling and community senior resources. Some grocery stores, churches and community centers have vans and shuttles available for seniors.

Acknowledgments:

National Safety Council

Centers for Disease Control

American Automobile Association



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