



Talking with Older Drivers

Is it Time to Put the Brakes On?





Peace of Mind

Visiting Angels provides seniors and adults with the needed assistance to continue living at home. With our local agency in your community and hundreds of Visiting Angels agencies across America, our mission is to maintain the independence and familiar surroundings for those in need of care. The families we care for aren't just clients to us. We provide services to many of our families for years because we work hard to establish lasting relationships with them. Like family, we're always here for you!

- A personalized care plan to suit your needs
- Complimentary, no obligation introductory home visit
- Relationships that stand the test of time

Is It Time to Put On the Brakes & Hang Up the Keys?

Review the questions below carefully. For best results, correct the items you have checked off.

Health, Safety & Home Assessment

Many Americans have expressed concern about the safety of a loved one, due to the growing number of older drivers and today's driving complexities. These decisions about driving are difficult for older Americans to make on their own.

This guide is to help bring about the conversation and assist you when the time is right to discuss the safety of your elderly relative, loved one or friend. More information is available at your state's department of motor vehicle office or website.

- » **What can I, as a family member or friend, do if I am concerned about the driving ability & safety of someone older who continues to drive?**

First, recognize that driving is very important as it is our primary means of getting around. Second, if there are other family members or friends available, talk with them to see if they have made some of the same observations & discuss how you may be able to help the driver.

- » **What can family members & friends do when a driver continues to drive against the advice of their doctor & others?**

It is best to maintain a sense of trust in your relationship, being honest & persistent. Encourage the person to make a decision to reduce or stop

driving as appropriate. Be aware that people who lose the privilege of driving often feel lonely or anxious because they have fewer opportunities to be with friends or involved in activities. If the person will not listen to reason, you may want to discuss the problem with their doctor to find out if there are any medical issues that should be reported.

- » **If an older driver stops driving, what alternative means are available?**

Most metropolitan areas have alternative means available, if you qualify. These services can be located within your community phone book. Be sensitive to the older person's feelings. Expect some emotional reactions, and do what you can to help them through this trying time.



Safety Precautions

1

WARNING SIGNS

Reaction time is one of the most crucial functions to safe driving. This slows with age, but increasing distance between other cars and objects may help some older drivers.



VISION

Good vision is essential to safe driving. An older person may notice difficulties focusing on objects & switching focus from near to far. The ability to see fine detail may diminish. Peripheral vision may also change with age. This is significant, because about 98% of what we see when we drive is seen first peripherally. Driving at night may become more difficult due to clarity in sight issues. As we get older, we need more light to see clearly. Approaching headlight glare may make it harder to adjust.



HEARING

Some hearing loss is common among people age 65 and older. High pitched sounds — such as horns, sirens & train whistles — may become less audible long before low pitched ones do. Studies show people who have hearing difficulties are more likely to be inattentive to their surroundings. Family & friends who suspect an older person doesn't hear well should recommend a hearing exam & offer to go with the older person to get one.

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It is important to understand that even after taking steps to correct diminished eyesight or hearing, and after successfully avoiding adverse reactions to medication, an older person still may not feel comfortable behind the wheel. Encourage the older person to discuss this with you, another family member, friend or doctor. As a family member or friend, you must be sensitive to this insecurity and help your elder loved one.

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