Visit the Alzheimer's Association Dementia and Driving Resource Center

Support is available at www.alz.org/driving. Resources include:

- Video scenarios showing four different families discussing driving and dementia.
- Tips and strategies for planning ahead and handling resistance.
- Common signs of unsafe driving.
- Resources for alternative methods of transportation.
- Additional information on driving and safety.

Get Help

- Call our 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900.
- Locate a support group in your community.
- Join ALZConnected, the first dedicated social networking community for people with Alzheimer's, their caregivers and others at www.alzconnected.org.
- Visit our message boards at ALZ.ORG®.

The MVA:

The MVA will work with you and the person with Alzheimer's or dementia. The MVA's Medical Advisory Board is committed to helping people drive for as long as they are able to do so safely. Confirmation of a family member's referral of concern will initiate a request for a physician's report. In addition, screening tests, including an MVA driving test, may be conducted.

Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland Chapter Offices

Central Maryland
1850 York Road, Suite D
Timonium, MD 21093
410.561.9099 (p) 410.561.3433 (f)

Eastern Shore
909 Progress Circle, Suite 400
Salisbury, MD 21804
410.543.1163 (p) 410.546.0184 (f)

Western Maryland
108 Byte Drive, Suite 103
Frederick, MD 21702
301.696.0315 (p) 301.696.9061 (f)

24/7 Helpline: 1.800.272.3900
www.alz.org/maryland
www.facebook.com/marylandalz
@AlzMaryland

Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration :

410.768.7000
TTY 1.800.492.4575

6601 Ritchie Highway N.E.
Glen Burnie, MD 21062
www.MVA.Maryland.gov

Committed to safety, service and you!

Maryland Department of Transportation

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alzheimer's association®

Is it Time to Stop Driving?

A Sensitive Guide For Caregivers of People With Alzheimer's and Related Disorders

Published jointly by the Motor Vehicle Administration and the Alzheimer's Association Greater Maryland Chapter

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive degenerative disease that attacks the brain and results in memory loss, impaired thinking, and behavioral/personality changes. More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and more than 86,000 Marylanders are affected. The progression varies from person to person. At present, there is no single standard test to determine if a person with Alzheimer's is safe to drive.

How Does Alzheimer's/Dementia Impact Driving:

People with Alzheimer's who continue to drive may be a danger to themselves and others. A person's ability to drive can change from day to day as a result of their dementia. Police officers report that people with Alzheimer's are often involved in fatal accidents.

Alzheimer's can cause a number of problems that may affect driving ability including:

- Memory loss and impaired judgment.
- Inability to perform routine tasks.
- Disorientation to time and space.
- Impaired visual and spatial perception.
- Slow reaction time and diminished attention span.
- Inability to recognize cues: stop signs, traffic lights, yields, etc.

Is it time to stop driving?

A person with dementia may not realize that they are an unsafe driver. If an individual is experiencing one or more of the following problems, it could be time to limit or stop driving:

- Gets lost while driving to a familiar location.
- Takes longer than usual when driving alone to and from familiar places, and then denies being lost.
- Drives at inappropriate speeds.
- Fails to observe routine traffic signals.
- Becomes unusually angry, frustrated or confused when driving.
- Gets involved in or causes accidents, including fender benders or close calls.
- Confuses the gas and brake pedals.

How do you take action when you think someone should stop driving?

Family members:

You have several options and can attempt more than one. Being sensitive to the fact that a person often feels a great loss when giving up driving will help in having someone "surrender the keys."

- Plan what you will say and solicit the support of the person's primary care physician or health care provider.
- Encourage the person to stop voluntarily.
- Plan to meet the person's transportation needs by assuring rides will be available when needed.
- Remind them that it is no longer safe for them to drive. Long explanations will not help.
- Many family members have successfully gotten a person with Alzheimer's to stop driving by asking the question: "Would you like your grandchild to ride with you?"
- Submit your concerns to the MVA.
- Though the direct approach to the issue may be taking the car keys away, determined individuals can find access to other cars and keys.

Physician/primary care provider:

- When taking a medical history, ask if the person is driving. Consider the degree of insight or denial when you ask about their recent driving record. It may also be helpful to obtain any historical information from family members.
- If you recommend that a patient stop driving, *prescribe* it in writing on a prescription pad.
- Refer the patient to the Alzheimer's Association.
- Document your discussion in his/her clinical file. If there are concerns that your patient will not stop, or has not complied with your recommendation, you can document that concern in writing to the MVA. You should include the patient's full name, address, date of birth and diagnosis.

NOTE: Maryland law grants immunity to physicians who report in good faith. You or a family member may contact the MVA to have the person with Alzheimer's/dementia evaluated for fitness to drive.