

HOW IS YOUR DRIVING HEALTH?

(See website for more detail on all information)

Vision

Good driving health begins with good vision. With declining vision, your responses to signals, signs, and changing traffic conditions become slower, increasing your crash risk.

Warning Signs

- You have **problems reading** highway or street signs.
- You have **trouble seeing** lane lines and other pavement markings; curbs and medians; and other vehicles and pedestrians, especially at dusk or dawn, and at night.
- You are experiencing **more discomfort** from the glare of oncoming headlights at night.



What You Can Do

- Make sure your corrective lenses have a current prescription, and always wear them. If you lose or break your glasses, don't rely on an old pair.
- Do not wear sunglasses or tinted lenses at night. Light reduction makes driving much more hazardous.
- Keep your windshield and headlights clean, and make sure your headlights are aimed correctly.
- Sit high enough in your seat so that you can see the road within 10 feet in front of your car. Use a firm cushion if your car seats don't have vertical adjustment.
- See your eye doctor every year to check for cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other conditions that increase crash risk.

Driving Health – Physical Fitness

Diminished strength, flexibility, & coordination will impact on your ability to control your vehicle in a safe manner.

Warning Signs

- You have **trouble** looking over your shoulder to change lanes, or **looking left and right** to check traffic at intersections.
- You have **trouble moving your foot** from the gas to the brake pedal, or turning the steering wheel.
- You have **fallen down** to the ground – not counting a trip or stumble – one or more times in the previous year.
- You **can't raise your arms** above your shoulders.
- You feel **pain** in your knees, legs, or ankles when going up or down a flight of stairs (10 steps).



What You Can Do

- Ask your doctor about any pain or physical fitness issues. Your doctor may have recommendations on a stretching, exercise, or walking program that is right for you.
- Check your local health clubs, senior centers, community colleges, and hospitals for fitness programs geared to the needs of seniors.
- A driving rehabilitation specialist may be able to prescribe special equipment for your car to make it easier to steer and to use your pedals.
- Adjust your side view mirrors to reduce blind spots.
 - From the driver's seat, place your head against window to the left & set left side mirror to see a small portion of your vehicle
 - From the driver's seat, place your head to center of vehicle and set right side mirror to see a small portion of your vehicle
 - If you use a wide-angle mirror, practice judging distances to other cars before using it in traffic.

Driving Health – Cognition, Attention and Reaction Time

Safe driving requires the ability to react, to divide attention & to make rapid responses. Growing older may limit these skills.

Warning Signs

- You feel **overwhelmed** by all of the signs, signals, markings, pedestrians, and other vehicles that you must pay attention to at intersections.
- Gaps in traffic are **harder to judge**, making it more difficult to turn left at intersections or to merge.
- You take **medications** that make you drowsy.
- You often get lost or become **disoriented**.
- You **aren't confident** that you can handle the demands of high speeds or heavy traffic volumes.
- You are **slower in seeing** cars coming or realizing that other cars have slowed or stopped ahead of you.



What You Can Do

- Avoid driving when taking certain medications.
- Plan your route. Drive where you are familiar.
- Drive during the day, and avoid rush hours.
- When approaching intersections, stay alert for cars and pedestrians entering from the side.
- Leave enough distance between you and the car ahead of you, but understand that too large a gap will invite others to cut in front of you.

Driver Self-Assessment Tools

You should assess your driving. Self-assessment helps you to recognize and correct possible shortcomings and plan ahead for the effects of aging. The assessment also helps a driver understand the concerns of others. Several organizations offer free self-assessment guides to help determine if you are a safe driver. Go to AAA (www.seniordrivers.org) for an online self-assessment screening tool.

Don't Ignore the Warning Signs

Has This Happened to You?

- A friend or family member has expressed concern about your driving.
- You sometimes get lost while driving on routes that were once familiar.
- You have been pulled over by a police officer and warned of poor driving behavior, regardless of whether or not you received a ticket.
- You have had several moving violations, near misses, or actual crashes in the past three years.
- Your doctor or health care giver has advised you to restrict or stop driving.

What You Can Do

- **Listen** to what people tell you who know you best and care the most about you.
- **Discuss** driving with your doctor – he or she can evaluate the interactions and side effects of all the medications you may be taking.
- **Refresh your knowledge** of safe driving practices and learn about new traffic control and roadway design features through a mature driver class.
- **Begin planning** for alternate ways of meeting your mobility needs. Now is the time to learn about mobility options in your community – try them out and see what works best for you.

Source: Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers (American Medical Association and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

MVA's Medical Advisory Board

What is the MAB?

- The Medical Advisory Board is made up of physicians from various medical specialties.
- They **assess** medical fitness to drive of individuals who have medical conditions that can impact on their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.
- They do this by **reviewing** medical information of drivers and then providing advice and recommendations to the Driver Wellness and Safety Division of MVA.
- Cases are reviewed on an **individual basis**, and depending on the severity and progress of a medical condition, individuals may be re-evaluated at various intervals.
- In many cases, drivers whose license privileges have not been approved or have been suspended, may be approved **at a later time** when their medical condition has improved.

The Referral & Medical Review Process

- **Self-reports** of any medical condition can be done at the MVA office at the time of renewal, or submitted anytime.
- Referrals from **professionals** – particularly law enforcement officials and health care providers – are reported directly to MVA if there are concerns about medical fitness to drive.
- Referrals can be made from **concerned citizens** – neighbors, friends, and family - of drivers with potential problems regarding their ability to drive.
 - *If you have specific concerns about a loved one, the best alternative is to discuss it with their health care provider; the provider can contact MVA directly with the necessary information, which will expedite the review process.*

See the MVA website for more details on submitting referrals.



Safe Mobility for Life



OLDER DRIVER SAFETY

For more detailed information and resource links, go to:
mva.maryland.gov/olderdriversafety

Test yourself to stay sharp and up-to-date on driver safety;
take the Online Driver Test Tutorial:

mva.maryland.gov/tutorial

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