Senior Driving Tips

Driving provides a sense of independence for seniors as it does for people of any age. Safe driving should be a priority for all drivers. Below are some tips to help you be at your very best when behind the wheel.

Vision

Remember to take care of your eyes. Many eye conditions can affect your vision and safety. Some conditions take hold slowly and drivers may not notice their vision has changed significantly until they have an eye examination. Bad weather combined with vision problems can also really decrease visibility.

Coordination

Staying fit can help with strength and dexterity needed for safe driving. Driving involves getting back and forth to the car, in and out of the car and often navigating steps and curbs. If strength and balance are a concern, your physician may suggest physical therapy. Stretching, walking and exercise programs can also help maintain your fitness.

Loss of height

As we age many of us lose height. Be sure to adjust your seat and mirrors to ensure proper view of the roadway. Use a firm cushion to raise you up if necessary and make sure you can properly reach the foot pedals.

Chronic Conditions

As we age many of us acquire chronic health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, heart conditions, hearing loss and decreased visual acuity. As the number of health conditions increase, so does risk associated with driving. This may be due to decreased function, increased medications or interactions between medications. Please consult your physician about all the medications you are taking including all OTC medications.

Refresher courses

It is natural to develop some bad habits over the years. The American Automobile Association (AAA) and the American Association of Retired People (AARP) offer refresher courses that provide instruction and materials. Some courses even include driving schools.

Experience

One advantage that senior drivers have is their experience and patience. You have come to realize that taking risks is unnecessary. There is no need to speed or cut people off while running errands.

Strategy

Plan outings between 9am and 3pm when possible to avoid congested roads. Also try to plan routes that avoid left hand turns and busy intersections.

Accidents can have serious physical, emotional and monetary outcomes for everyone involved. Often people outlive their ability to drive safely.

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