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Recognizing the Signs: Senior Driving Safety

Driving is a complex, fast-paced activity. A typical driver makes 20 decisions per mile, with less than half a second of reaction time avoid a collision.

At any age, we need to ask ourselves this question: Am I a safe driver? After all, most of us want to make a responsible choice to protect others and ourselves when we drive. Age can affect our ability to sense, decide, and act.

Self-assessment

If you answer 'yes' to the following, then a follow-up may be needed to ensure safe driving.

- Suffered a stroke, heart attack or diminished eyesight?
- Experienced difficulty in negotiating sharp turns and intersections?
- Hesitated over right-of-way decisions or situations you once took for granted?
- Been surprised by the sudden presence of other vehicles or pedestrians?
- Received negative feedback from other drivers?
- Become lost on familiar routes?
- Felt nervous or exhausted after driving?
- Been cited for traffic violations or found at fault in crashes?

Medicine Alert

Older Americans consume more medications and have more chronic conditions than any other portion of the population. The risk for medication side effects and interactions increases with the number of medications taken each day.

Talk to your medical professional about any side effects your medication may have, and if it may affect your ability to drive.

Common drugs that affect driving:

- Benzodiazepines for anxiety or insomnia
- Insulin for diabetes
- Antispasmodics for ulcers
- Pain medicines and some anti-inflammatories
- Some high blood pressure medications and diuretics
- Antibiotics for infections
- Antihistamines for allergies
- Cardiac glycosides for congestive heart failure
- Antidepressants

Are your driving skills what they used to be? Find out here with our quick test. [Learn more](#)

If you are unsure of your performance, talk it over with a trusted friend or family member, or attend a [CarFit event](#) in your area and work with a trained professional to complete the 12-point checklist. Assessment resources are available through Virginia GrandDriver.

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles also offers [driver improvement clinics](#) that provide defensive driving techniques that can help you avoid and prevent crashes. These eight-hour classroom sessions are offered at sites around the state.

GrandDriver is an educational resource designed to provide Virginians with information and resources about staying safe and mobile on the road as they age. GrandDriver is an initiative of the [Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services](#), and is funded by the [Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles](#).

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Virginia GrandDriver

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