

FUNCTIONAL FRIDAY

Older Driver Safety Awareness: Anticipating Changes that Affect Driving

Aging can cause many changes to your body, and these changes can have potential effects on your abilities in daily activities.

Driving requires a high level of physical, sensory, and cognitive skills, and normal aging changes can affect each of these areas. It is best to anticipate these changes and be educated and proactive about possible solutions.

Potential changes include:

- Changes in movement (pain, stiffness, reaction speed)
- Changes in vision and/or hearing
- Concentration change and/or temporary memory lapses

A physical exam can identify any changes that could affect your driving, determine what is causing these changes, and how they can be addressed.



- Things to talk to your doctor about and possibly adjust if you notice changes in your driving abilities:
 - Medications
 - Changes in vision
 - Nutrition and fitness levels

- Self-assessments of driving are a good option if you want to assess your abilities and safety on the road.
 - AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety offers a driving self-assessment that you can take to assess your abilities and learn about potential adjustments you could make
 - This can be found at www.aaafoundation.org

- Free CarFit events within the community can help you learn about the safety features of your car and how to make adjustments that may improve your positioning, comfort, and safety when driving your vehicle
 - These events are a great way to learn and get individualized tips for adjustments in your vehicle.
 - www.Car-Fit.org

- To ensure your safety and the safety of others when driving, here are a few helpful tips to adapt to changes:
 - Choose to drive in daylight hours, on familiar, unbusy streets, be well rested, and drive with as little distractions as possible
 - Stay up to date on local and state driving regulations, such as more frequent vision screenings or driving assessments after illness or stroke
 - Accept offers for rides when you are not feeling comfortable driving, or take the bus, taxi, etc

Some useful websites to learn more include:

Health conditions and medications that can affect driving, safety tips, evaluations, and more:

- AAA's Senior Driver Page: <https://seniordriving.aaa.com/>
- How can medications affect driving safety? AAA's Roadwise RX

Changes that can affect safe driving and potential warning signs of impairment:

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Older Drivers Website: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers>
- NHTSA's resource to Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully
<https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/Driving%20Safely%20Aging%20Web/index.html>

Ohio Department of Aging Driving Fitness Resources:

<https://aging.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/aging/care-and-living/staying-active/staying-active-catalog/how-your-driving-ability-changes>