

Older Drivers: Exploring Available Online Resources

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Driving has become a very hot topic over the past few years. The population is aging, new technology is being developed, and people have more to distract them while in their car. Americans seem to be taking a new look at what it means to be behind the wheel for all ages. Not only does the sandwich generation need to worry about teenage drivers, they now need to worry about an aging parent on the road. When does one discuss with older family members that it might be time to limit or give up driving a car? For most families, this can be one of the most difficult conversations to have with a parent. Luckily for us in the age of the Internet, there are resources at our fingertips.

1. For most of us, the thought of not being able to drive is associated with loss of independence. AARP has excellent resources to help older adults and their families with concerns about driving and safety. Explore the warning signs that can help determine when a loved one should limit or stop driving. Test your driving IQ. Find out more at:
http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/.
2. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older drivers wear their seatbelts more often than other age groups. However, when compared to younger drivers, older adults injured in motor vehicle crashes are more likely to die from their injuries. To find out more statistics on older drivers, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/older.htm>
3. The California Department of Motor Vehicles, http://www.dmv.ca.gov/about/senior/senior_top.htm, has information developed for senior drivers. Find articles, print booklets, and take the Senior Driver Self Assessment to determine if you should be behind the wheel. You can also download a PowerPoint presentation by Patrick Barrett at:
<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=16&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.aamva.org%2Faamva%2FDocumentDisplay.aspx%3Fid%3D%257B50EA03B8-DBC7-478C-ADE7-F1B48E7907D7%257D&ei=A0cgSYqvLYmasQPInfC3CA&usg=AFQjCNEldnYqpOocXO-PUSJuiVzW1Md9sQ&sig2=LUa32fRNvwDy7P29sRVppg>
4. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has wonderful material posted on their website. You can find information not only for older drivers, but for all older road users including passengers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. NHTSA's mission, through research and outreach activities, is to develop programs aimed at helping aging individuals recognize their changing abilities and adapt or find alternatives for safe transportation. Find resources, guides, fact sheets, research studies, booklets and more at:
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/olddrive/index.html>

5. According to their website, H.E.L.P. is a community-funded, non-profit (charitable) information resource for Older Adults. Its goal is to help Older Adults maintain independence and create better futures. Find information on California's driving rules at:
http://www.help4srs.org/legal/driving_older_adults.htm
6. For some individuals, talking with the family doctor is the first place to go to seek information. At <http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/seniors/active-living/487.html>, there are resources to help assess driving skills in older adults. Explore an article on physicians and their role in reducing unsafe older drivers on the road at:
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1829436>. The Alzheimer's Association has excellent resources. Start with an article on the physician's role in assessing driving skills of older patients at:
<http://www.alz.org/careconference/08/downloads/handouts/S2.02.7%20Am%20I%20Safe%20o%20Drive.pdf>. The Senior Journal has information on senior citizen drivers and other links at: <http://seniorjournal.com/NEWS/Aging/6-12-28-SeniorCitizensDriving.htm>. The American Medical Association believes the safety of older drivers is a public health issue and physicians play an important role in the safe mobility of older patients. To find out more about the risks, visit: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/8925.html>
7. According to the American Society on Aging, driving represents the ability to maintain connections and contribute to the community. The [asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org) website is a good source of information on older adults and driving issues:
<http://www.asaging.org/CDC/module4/phase1/index.cfm>.
8. The California Department on Aging (CDA) mission is to promote the independence and well-being of older adults, adults with disabilities, and families. You can find out about the wide range of federal and state-funded services at their website: <http://www.aging.ca.gov/>. Here you will find excellent links to resources for older Californian drivers. Be sure to check out the link to the California Highway Patrols' online videos on how to discuss driving issues with older adults.
9. At the Center for Injury Prevention Policy & Practice's [Eldersafety.org](http://www.eldersafety.org) website, http://www.eldersafety.org/resources/for_health_care_providers.html, you can investigate information for facilitating safe mobility for seniors. There are downloadable publications, statistics, information for healthcare providers and families, brochures, and more on important issues related to California driver safety.
10. The National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST), has great resources for older drivers and their families. According to the NCST, the well-documented trauma of giving up the keys provides considerable evidence that older adults equate driving with three little words: freedom, independence, and control. To find out more, visit:
http://seniortransportation.easterseals.com/site/DocServer/Transportation_Options_and_Older_Adults_BF_1_v1.2.pdf?docID=61803,

11. According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), by 2020, there will be more than 40 million licensed drivers ages 65 and older on the road. In addition, seniors make up 13 percent of all traffic fatalities and 12 percent of all vehicle occupant fatalities. To read more, visit: <http://www.aaanewsroom.net/main/Default.asp?CategoryID=7&ArticleID=280>.
12. At SafetyFirst Systems, a leading provider of safety products and driver training products, you will find a great article on older drivers:
<http://my.safetyfirst.com/newsfart/LCQFeb08MissDaisy.pdf>,
13. Drivers.com specializes in driving, driver behavior, and traffic safety. On their web site, find information for both traffic safety professionals and the general public, with information on older drivers at: <http://www.drivers.com/topic/10/>.
14. At the National Institute on Aging (NIA), find driving safety tips and resources to other links at: <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/drivers.htm>. The NIA Age Pages are terrific handouts to distribute or post for your class.
15. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Office of Safety is committed to providing a safe environment for older road users. Find interesting facts and resources online at: http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/older_driver/index.htm. Don't miss the **[Pocket Guide to Improve Traffic Control and Mobility for our Older Population](#)**.
16. According to the Hartford, limiting driving for older adults presents practical problems and can cause strong emotions, from sadness to anger. Check out their website for information on Family Conversations with Older Drivers, at: <http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/>. Don't miss their "Warning Signs for Older Drivers" worksheet, <http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/worksheets/main.htm>,