

Appendix B

**Patient and Caregiver
Educational Materials**

Patient, Family and Caregiver Resource Sheets

The materials in Appendix B are handouts for patients, their family members and caregivers. We encourage physicians to make copies of these handouts and use them when discussing driving issues.

These handouts were designed to be user-friendly and simple to read. All patient education materials were written at or below a 6th grade reading level, and all family and caregiver materials were written at a 7th grade reading level.

Listed below are additional resources and references for the materials in this Appendix:

At the Crossroads—A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving. Hartford, CT: The Hartford; 2000.

Creating Mobility Choices: The Older Driver Skill Assessment and Resource Guide. Washington, DC: American Association of Retired Persons; 1998.

Drivers 55 Plus: Check Your Own Performance. Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety; 1994.

Driving Safely as You Get Older: A Personal Guide. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation; 1999.

Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully. Washington, DC: USAA Educational Foundation; 1999.

Family Conversations that Help Parents Stay Independent. Washington, DC: American Association of Retired Persons; 2001.

How to Help an Older Driver: A Guide for Planning Safe Transportation. Washington, DC: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety; 2000.

LePore PR. *When You Are Concerned—A handbook for families, friends and caregivers worried about the safety of an aging driver.* Albany, NY: New York State Office for the Aging; 2000.

Older drivers on the go: Making decisions they can live with. *UMTRI Research Review.* 2001;32:1-5.

Family and Friends Concerned About an Older Driver. Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; 2001.

Am I a Safe Driver?

Check the box if the statement applies to you.

- I get lost while driving.
- My friends and family members say they are worried about my driving.
- Other cars seem to appear out of nowhere.
- I have trouble seeing signs in time to respond to them.
- Other drivers drive too fast.
- Other drivers often honk at me.
- Driving stresses me out.
- After driving, I feel tired.
- I have had more “near misses” lately.
- Busy intersections bother me.
- Left-hand turns make me nervous.
- The glare from oncoming headlights bothers me.
- My medication makes me dizzy or drowsy.
- I have trouble turning the steering wheel.
- I have trouble pushing down on the gas pedal or brakes.
- I have trouble looking over my shoulder when I back up.
- I have been stopped by the police for my driving recently.
- People will no longer accept rides from me.
- I don't like to drive at night.
- I have more trouble parking lately.

If you have checked any of the boxes, your safety may be at risk when you drive. Talk to your doctor about ways to improve your safety when you drive.

Successful Aging Tips

Tip #1: Take care of your health.

Visit your doctor regularly. Ask about tests and immunizations that are right for your age group.

Eat a healthy diet. Your diet should be low in fat and high in fiber.

- Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, beans and whole grains.
- Eat low fat proteins in the form of lean red meat, poultry and fish.
- Get enough calcium by drinking low fat milk and eating low fat yogurt and cheese.
- Eat a variety of foods to get enough vitamins and minerals in your diet.
- Drink lots of water.

Exercise to stay fit. Be active every day at your own level of comfort.

- Walk, dance, or swim to improve your endurance.
- Work out with weights to increase your strength.
- Stretch to maintain your flexibility.

Don't drink too much alcohol. People over the age of 65 should try not to have more than one drink per day. (A drink is one glass of wine, one bottle of beer, or one shot of liquor.) And remember: never drink alcohol with your medicines!

Don't use tobacco in any form. This means cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chew or snuff. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor.

Tip #2: Keep yourself safe.

Make your home a safe place.

- Keep your home, walkways and stairways well-lit and uncluttered.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors in your home. Make sure the batteries in your smoke detectors work.
- Adjust the thermostat on your hot water tank so that you don't burn yourself with hot water.

Prevent falls.

- Make sure all throw rugs have non-slip backs so they don't throw you!
- Slip-proof your bathtub with a rubber mat.

Stay safe in the car.

- Wear your safety belt—and wear it correctly. (It should go over your shoulder and across your lap.)
- Never drink and drive!
- Don't drive when you are angry, upset, sleepy or ill.
- If you have concerns about your driving safety, talk to your doctor.

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Tip #3: Take care of your emotional health.

Keep in touch with family and friends.

It's important to maintain your social life!

Exercise your mind. Keep your mind active by reading books, doing crossword puzzles, and taking classes.

Stay involved. Join community activities or volunteer projects. Somebody needs what you can offer!

Keep a positive attitude!

- Focus on the good things in your life, and don't dwell on the bad.
- Do the things that make you happy.
- If you've been feeling sad lately or no longer enjoy the things you used to, ask your doctor for help.

Tip #4: Plan for your future.

Keep track of your money. Even if someone else is helping you manage your bank accounts and investments, stay informed.

Know your own health. This is important for receiving good medical care.

- Know what medical conditions you have.
- Know the names of your medicines and how to take them.
- Make a list of your medical conditions, medicines, drug allergies (if any), and the names of your doctors. Keep this list in your wallet.

Make your health care wishes known to your family and doctors.

- Consider filling out an advance directives form. This form lets you state your health care choices or name someone to make these choices for you.
- Give your family and doctors a copy. This way, they have a written record of your choices in case you are unable to tell them yourself.
- If you need help with your advance directives, talk to your doctor.

Create a transportation plan. If you don't drive, know how to get around.

- Ask family and friends if they would be willing to give you a ride.
- Find out about buses, trains, and shuttles in your area.
- If you need help finding a ride, contact your local Area Agency on Aging.

Tips for Safe Driving

Tip #1: Drive with care.

Always—

- Plan your trips ahead of time. Decide what time to leave and which roads to take. Try to avoid heavy traffic, poor weather and high-speed areas.
- Wear your safety belt—and wear it correctly. (It should go over your shoulder and across your lap.)
- Drive at the speed limit. It's unsafe to drive too fast or too slow.
- Be alert! Pay attention to traffic at all times.
- Keep enough distance between you and the car in front of you.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Use your turn signals and remember to look around you for people and other cars.
- Check your blind spot when changing lanes or backing up.
- Be extra careful at train tracks. Remember to look both ways for trains.
- When you take a new medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist about side effects. Many medicines may affect your driving even when you feel fine. If your medicine makes you dizzy or drowsy, talk to your doctor to find out ways to take your medicine so it doesn't affect your driving.

Never—

- Never drink and drive.
- Never drive when you feel angry or tired. If you start to feel tired, stop your car somewhere safe. Take a break until you feel more alert.
- Never eat, drink or use a cell phone while driving.

If—

- If you don't see well in the dark, try not to drive at night or during storms.
- If you have trouble making left turns at an intersection, make three right turns instead of one left turn.
- If you can, avoid driving in bad weather, such as during rain, sleet or snow.

Tip #2: Take care of your car.

- Make sure you have plenty of gas in your car.
- Have your car tuned up regularly.
- Keep your windshields and mirrors clean.
- Keep a cloth in your car for cleaning windows.
- Replace your windshield wiper blades when they become worn out.
- Consider using Rain-X® or a similar product to keep your windows clear.
- If you are shopping for a new car, look for a car with power steering and automatic transmission.

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Tip #3: Know where you can find a ride.

How do you get around when your car is in the shop? If you don't know the answer to this question, it's time for you to put together a "transportation plan."

A transportation plan is a list of all the ways that you can get around. Use this list when your car is in the shop or when you don't feel safe driving. Your transportation plan might include:

- Rides from friends and family
- Taxi
- Bus or train
- Senior shuttle

If you need help creating a transportation plan, your doctor can get you started.

Tip #4: Take a driver safety class.

To learn how to drive more safely, try taking a class. In a driver safety class, the instructor teaches you skills that you can use when you are driving. To find a class near you, call one of the following programs:

AARP 55 ALIVE Driver Safety Program
1 888 227-7669

AAA Safe Driving for Mature Operators Program
Call your local AAA club to find a class near you.

National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course
1 800 621-7619

Driving School Association of the Americas, Inc.
1 800 270-3722

These classes usually last several hours. They don't cost much—some are even free. As an added bonus, you might receive a discount on your auto insurance after taking one of these classes. Talk to your insurance company to see if it offers a discount.

How to Help the Older Driver

As experienced drivers grow older, changes in their vision, attention and physical abilities may cause them to drive less safely than they used to. Sometimes these changes happen so slowly that the drivers are not even aware that their driving safety is at risk.

If you have questions about a loved one's driving safety, here's what you can do to help him or her stay safe AND mobile.

Is your loved one a safe driver?

If you have the chance, go for a ride with your loved one. Look for the following warning signs in his or her driving:

- Forgets to buckle up
- Does not obey stop signs or traffic lights
- Fails to yield the right of way
- Drives too slowly or too quickly
- Often gets lost, even on familiar routes
- Stops at a green light or at the wrong time
- Doesn't seem to notice other cars, walkers, or bike riders on the road
- Doesn't stay in his or her lane
- Is honked at or passed often
- Reacts slowly to driving situations
- Makes poor driving decisions

Other signs of unsafe driving include:

- Recent near misses or fender benders
- Recent tickets for moving violations
- Comments from passengers about close calls, near misses, or the driver not seeing other vehicles
- Recent increase in the car insurance premium

Riding with or following this person every once in a while is one way to keep track of his or her driving. Another way is to talk to this person's spouse or friends.

If you are concerned about your loved one's driving, what can you do?

Talk to your loved one. Say that you are concerned about his or her driving safety. Does he or she share your concern?

- Don't bring up your concerns in the car. It's dangerous to distract the driver! Wait until you have his or her full attention.
- Explain why you are concerned. Give specific reasons—for example, recent fender benders, getting lost, or running stop signs.
- Realize that your loved one may become upset or defensive. After all, driving is important for independence and self-esteem.
- If your loved one doesn't want to talk about driving at this time, bring it up again later. Your continued concern and support may help him or her feel more comfortable with this topic.
- Be a good listener. Take your loved one's concerns seriously.

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Help make plans for transportation. When your loved one is ready to talk about his or her driving safety, you can work together to create plans for future safety.

- Make a formal agreement about driving. In this agreement, your loved one chooses a person to tell him or her when it is no longer safe to drive. This person then agrees to help your loved one make the transition to driving retirement. You can find a sample agreement in *At the Crossroads: A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving*. Order a free copy by writing to: At the Crossroads Booklet, The Hartford, 200 Executive Boulevard, Southington, CT 06489.
- Help create a transportation plan (see the next column). Your loved one may rely less on driving if he or she has other ways to get around.

Encourage a visit to the doctor. The doctor can check your loved one's medical history, list of medicines, and current health to see if any of these may be affecting his or her driving safety. The doctor can also provide treatment to help improve driving safety.

Encourage your loved one to take a driving test. A driver rehabilitation specialist (DRS) can assess your loved one's driving safety through an office exam and driving test. The DRS can also teach special techniques or suggest special equipment to help him or her drive more safely. (To find a DRS in your area, ask your doctor for a referral or contact the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED). Contact information for ADED is listed on the following page.) If a DRS is not available in your area, contact a local driving school or your state's Department of Motor Vehicles to see if they can do a driving test.

How to help when your loved one retires from driving.

At some point, your loved one may need to stop driving for his or her own safety and the safety of others on the road. You and your loved one may come to this decision yourselves, or at the recommendation of the doctor, driver rehabilitation specialist, driving instructor, or Department of Motor Vehicles. When someone close to you retires from driving, there are several things you can do to make this easier for him or her:

Create a transportation plan. It's often easier for people to give up driving if they have other ways to get around. Help your loved one create a list of "tried-and-true" ride options. This list can include:

- The names and phone numbers of friends and relatives who are willing to give rides, with the days and times they are available.
- The phone number of a local cab company.
- Which bus or train to take to get to a specific place. Try riding with your loved one the first time to help him or her feel more comfortable.
- The phone number for a shuttle service. Call the community center and regional transit authority to see if they offer a door-to-door shuttle service for older passengers.
- The names and phone numbers of volunteer drivers. Call the community center, church, or synagogue to see if they have a volunteer driver program.
- If you need help finding other ride options, contact the Area Agency on Aging. (The contact information is on the next page.)

If your loved one can't go shopping, help him or her shop from home. Arrange for medicines and groceries to be delivered. Explore on-line ordering or subscribe to catalogs and "go shopping" at home. See which services make house calls—local hairdressers or barbers may be able to stop by for a home visit.

Encourage social activities. Visits with friends, time spent at the senior center, and volunteer work are important for one's health and well-being. When creating a transportation plan, don't forget to include rides to social activities. It's especially important for your loved one to maintain social ties and keep spirits high during this time of adjustment.

Be there for your loved one. Let your loved one know that he or she has your support. Offer help willingly and be a good listener. This is an emotionally difficult time, and it's important to show that you care.

Where can I get more help?

Contact the following organizations if you need more help assessing your loved one's driving safety or creating a transportation plan.

American Automobile Association (AAA) Foundation for Traffic Safety

1 800 993-7222

www.aaafoundation.org

Call the toll-free number or visit the Web site to order free booklets on how to help an older driver.

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

55 ALIVE Driver Safety Program

1 888 227-7669

www.aarp.org/drive

Visit the Web site to find safe driving tips, information on aging and driving, and details about the 55 ALIVE Driver Safety Program—a classroom course for drivers age 50 and older. In this course, participants review driving skills and learn tips to help them drive more safely. Call the toll-free number or visit the Web site above to find a class in your loved one's area.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

Eldercare Locator: 1 800 677-1116

www.aoa.gov

The local Area Agency on Aging can connect your loved one to services in the area, including ride programs, Meals-on-Wheels, home health services, and more. Call the Eldercare Locator or visit the Web site above to find the phone number for your loved one's local Area Agency on Aging.

Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED)

1 800 290-2344

www.driver-ed.org or www.aded.net

Call the toll-free number or visit the Web site to find a driver rehabilitation specialist in your loved one's area.

Easter Seals

1 312 726-7200

Easter Seals' *Caregiver Transportation Toolkit* includes a video, booklet, and list of helpful products and resources for family caregivers and volunteer drivers. To order the toolkit, call the number above or write to: Easter Seals National Headquarters, 230 Monroe Street, Suite 1800, Chicago, IL 60606.

National Association of Private Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM)

1 520 881-8008

www.caremanager.org

A geriatric care manager can help older persons and their families arrange long-term care, including transportation services. Call the phone number or visit the Web site above to find a geriatric care manager in your loved one's area.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

www.socialworkers.org

A social worker can counsel your loved one, assess social and emotional needs, and assist in locating and coordinating transportation and community services. To find a qualified clinical social worker in your loved one's area, search the NASW Register of Clinical Social Workers. (To access this directory on the Web site, click on 'Resources' at the top of the page.)

Getting By Without Driving

Who doesn't drive?

If you don't drive, you're in good company. Many people stop driving because of the hassle and expense of auto insurance, car maintenance, and gasoline. Other people stop driving because they feel unsafe on the road. Some people never learned how to drive in the first place!

Although most Americans use their cars to get around, many people get by just fine without one. In this sheet, we suggest ways to get by without driving.

Where can you find a ride?

Here are some ways to get a ride. See which ones work best for you.

- Ask a friend or relative for a ride. Offer to pay for the gasoline.
- Take public transportation. Can a train or bus take you where you need to go? Call your regional transit authority and ask for directions.
- Take a taxi cab. To cut down on costs, try sharing a cab with friends. Also, find out if your community offers discounted fares for seniors.
- Ride a Senior Transit Shuttle. Call your community center or local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to see if your neighborhood has a shuttle service. (Contact information for the AAA is on the next page.)
- Ask about volunteer drivers. Call your community center, church or synagogue to see if they have a volunteer driver program.
- Ride a Medi-car. If you need a ride to your doctor's office, call your local Area Agency on Aging to see if a Medi-car can take you there. (Contact information for the AAA is on the next page.)

If you can't go out to get something, have it come to you.

Many stores will deliver their products straight to your door.

- Have your groceries delivered. Many stores deliver for free or for a low fee. You can also ask your family, friends or volunteers from your local community center, church or synagogue, if they can pick up your groceries for you.
- Order your medicines by mail. Not only is this more convenient—it's often less expensive, too. Order only from pharmacies that you know and trust.
- Have your meals delivered to you. Many restaurants will deliver meals for free or for a low fee. Also, you may be eligible for Meals-on-Wheels, a program that delivers hot meals at a low cost. Call your local Area Agency on Aging for more information about Meals-on-Wheels. (Contact information for the AAA is on the next page.)
- Shop from catalogs. You can buy almost everything you need from catalogs: clothing, pet food, toiletries, gifts, and more! Many catalogs are now also available on the Internet.

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