



Is Driving Your Best Choice?

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT DRIVING FOR
PEOPLE WITH MEMORY PROBLEMS**

Companion to:
*Is It Time to Stop Driving? Plain Talk About
Driving and Memory Problems*



“I caught myself going through a red light. Didn’t realize it was there. I quit on my own.”

How do you know it’s time to stop driving?

Giving up driving may be one of the most difficult choices a person with memory problems has to make. This booklet is meant to help you decide when that time has come. Many of the suggestions come from drivers with memory problems themselves, their families and the people who work with them.

Memory problems can interfere with your ability to drive safely. People with memory problems have difficulty doing the following:

- Finding their way.
- Keeping track of what other drivers are doing.
- Observing traffic signs and signals.
- Reacting quickly and appropriately in an emergency.

Are any of these a problem for you? Ask yourself the questions on the next page to find out.

Driving Self-Evaluation for People with Memory Problems

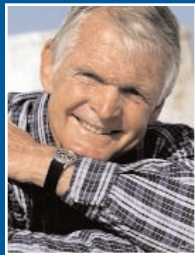
1. Have you gotten lost going some place familiar? Yes No
2. Has anyone told you that you should stop driving? Yes No
3. Have you gone through a red light or stop sign without realizing it? Yes No
4. Have you ever confused the brake and the gas pedal or had trouble deciding which one to use? Yes No
5. Have you hit or nearly hit someone or something? Yes No
6. Have you recently been stopped by a policeman who questioned how you were driving? Yes No
7. Have you ever thought or been told that you shouldn't drive with your grandchildren in the car? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then it is time for you to talk about your driving with someone you trust and to have a driving evaluation.





“You have no right to risk somebody’s life.”



“Think of the money you’re going to save.”

Why should you stop driving?

Other people with memory problems have given these reasons to stop driving:

- You might cause an accident.
- Think how bad you would feel if you hurt someone, maybe someone you love, a small child or a beloved pet.
- You could be seriously hurt.
- You can save a lot of money – try adding up the cost of a car, gas, oil, tires, insurance and you may be surprised.
- Once you have been told you are not a safe driver, you take a great legal risk if you continue to drive.
- Your family and friends will be very relieved if you stop driving.

But if I stop driving, how can I get around?

When you stop driving, you will need new ways to get around. Consider these possibilities:

- Do you have someone nearby who can drive you?
- Can a friend give you a ride to religious services or your club meeting?
- Is it possible to walk to the store or post office? Can you do this without getting lost?
- Can you pay a neighbor to drive you?
- Are taxis available in your neighborhood?
- Is there a home delivery meal service or meals-on-wheels service for older people in your community? Restaurants that will deliver hot meals?
- Are delivery services available at your supermarket, pharmacy, department store, etc.?
- Ask your church, temple, doctor, senior center, health care clinic, etc., if they offer transportation.
- Can you obtain some things through mail order or catalogs?
- Can you move to a community that provides transportation or is within easy walking distance of essential services?
- Don't forget, you can call 911 in an emergency. You do not have to drive and probably shouldn't if there's a real emergency.



“You are not less of a man (or woman) if you stop driving.”



“I’m not going to let this square piece of plastic (driver’s license) be the sum total of my worth as a human being.”



Helpful Hints:

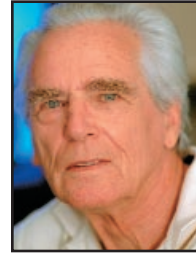
- Talk with your family. Tell them your concerns about driving.
- Ask your local driver license office how you can get an identification card to replace your driver license.
- Many communities have driver evaluation centers where you can be tested.
- Many communities also have support groups for people with memory problems. You can learn a lot from people with similar concerns.
- Ask for help from Alzheimer's support organizations, senior (or elder) help lines, Area Agencies on Aging, senior centers and religious organizations. Some of them may be able to help you.

What You Can Do

Your local Area Agency on Aging can suggest transportation services and benefits that you might not be aware of and that you are qualified to receive. Find out if there is an agency for the transportation disadvantaged in your area to see if you are eligible for services that meet your transportation needs.

- Learn what is available in your community and what is appropriate for you.
- Potential services include:
 - Taxi cabs and personalized driver services.
 - Shuttle buses, such as those offered by churches, senior centers and retirement communities.
 - City buses, trams and train systems.
- If public transportation service is available in your area, ask a friend to help you learn how to use it.
- Going with someone who knows how to ride the bus or train may make you feel more secure.
- Ask questions about the services and schedules of each type of transportation available to you, including whether they offer evening or weekend rides.

It is not always easy to find good substitutes for driving your own car. But it is important to avoid becoming isolated just because you can no longer drive.



“You have been elevated to that elegant position of having earned the right to be chauffeured at this time in your life.”



“It’s not how you get somewhere that counts, it’s what you do when you get there.”

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Acknowledgment and thanks are extended to the partners in this endeavor: Florida Atlantic University, Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida At-Risk Driver Council, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Florida Alzheimer's Disease Initiative and Memory Disorder Clinics and the Pasco-Pinellas Area Agency on Aging, Inc. and the people who agreed to be interviewed in preparation of this guide.



Funding for this publication was made possible
through a grant from the
Florida Department of Transportation

