



To Drive or Not To Drive?

The Facts:

✓ There are approximately 4.5 million non-drivers in the US today. By 2020, there will be at least 6 million non-drivers older than age 75.

✓ Staying connected to our communities is a sign of successful aging and not being able to drive represents not only a loss of independence, but a loss of connection as well.

✓ Statistics show that most older adults are safe drivers, with high safety belt use and few citations for speeding, reckless driving or alcohol-related charges. In fact, the number of accidents involving older drivers decreases as age increases. Experts believe this is because older drivers decide to set their own limits, such as:

- Driving fewer miles
- Avoiding driving at night and during bad weather
- Steering clear of rush-hour traffic

✓ However, medical conditions, medication usage and reduced physical function can increase the risk of accidents and injury among older adults, especially after age 75, when the risk of being involved in a collision increases for every mile they drive. **The rate of risk for adults over age 75 is nearly equal to the risk of younger drivers age 16 to 24.**

Each family must ask, "Is my older relative a safe driver?" Successful family conversations begin with good preparation and caring communication. Being sensitive toward the feelings of older drivers, can help the older driver make safe driving decisions and ensure peace of mind for the entire family.

Ideally, conversations about safe driving should occur long before driving becomes a problem. Early, occasional and candid conversations establish a pattern of open discussions and allow time for the older adult to consider his or her driving skills and make appropriate adjustments.

Hearing sensitive information from the right person can make a big difference. Carefully select the person who will start the discussion. Typically, older adults prefer to speak confidentially about driving safety with someone they trust. Outspoken or authoritative family members are not ideal to start the early discussions on driving, but may better serve as the enforcer of driving decisions later on, if necessary.

Compiled from AARP Website We Need To Talk & The Hartford: Are Older Drivers At Risk (<http://www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/driversatrisk.htm>)



A Note From The Editor

In this issue, we turn our attention from foot traffic to the roads and road safety.

Hopefully, you found our first newsletter on elder-friendly walkable communities informative. Free back issues of the SILVER newsletter are available at www.jfsdelaware.org. If you don't have computer access, contact JFS (302) 478-9411 for a copy.

Here are a few resources when it comes to transportation. The back of the newsletter includes even more resources.

JFS

Care Management program is a source of information and referrals for seniors. JFS also offers AARP Driver Safety Courses. **478-9411**

Fox Rehab

Clinical Assessments/Driving Evaluations looking at the skills necessary for safe driving. **1-877-407-3422**

Wilmington Senior Center & Brandywine Senior Center

Offer transportation services for seniors to their centers. Call for details.

**Wilmington Senior Center-
651-3400**
**Brandywine Senior Center-
798-5562**

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Am I a Safe Driver?

Check the circle if the statement applies to you:

- My friends and family members say they are worried about my driving.
- Other cars seem to appear out of nowhere.
- The glare from oncoming headlights bothers me.
- I have trouble pushing down on the gas pedal or brakes.
- I have trouble seeing signs in time to respond to them.
- 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.
- My medication makes me dizzy or drowsy.
- I have trouble turning the steering wheel.
- I don’t like to drive at night.
- I get lost while driving.
- Other drivers drive too fast.
- I have more trouble parking lately.

- 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.

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.

This self exam is reprinted from the Physician’s Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers.

The SILVER Mission:
To enable older adults to stay in their homes and community for as long as they can, with the support they need to remain healthy, safe, engaged citizens.

The SILVER Vision:
To create an environment that nurtures healthy aging for community residents and inspires residents of all ages to work toward this goal.

SILVER Resources

Transportation Alternatives

Paratransit

Door-to-door service for eligible disabled individuals and senior citizens, 24 hour notice needed.

1-800-553-DART

SCAT

(Senior Citizen Affordable Taxi)

Sponsored by the Dept. of Transportation, 1/2 price taxi service for persons 60 and over and qualified disabled persons.

New Castle County **652-DART**

FISH

Pre-arranged (1 week) free/donations accepted **transportation to medical appointments.**

New Castle County **658-2954**

Generations

60+ Medical Transportation

Transport **to and from medical treatments** for persons 60+

New Castle County **658-6731**