



When Driving Is An Issue With Elderly Parents

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Driving is a symbol of independence that is often difficult for older parents to give up. However, when driving skills decline with age, seniors pose a risk to themselves, other drivers and pedestrians. For more information, see: www.aging-parents-and-elder-care.com/Pages/Checklists/Elderly_Drivers.html.

Signs That A Parent May Be At Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty in coordination and judging distance and space• Difficulty engaging in multiple tasks; easily confused• More than one accident or near miss during a 6 month period• Memory difficulties; gets lost repeatedly, even in familiar areas• Driving at an inappropriate speed• Failing to observe traffic signals• Asking passengers to help check if it is clear to pass or turn• Drifts across lane markings or bumps into curbs
What to Do If It Is Unsafe For A Parent to Drive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain an evaluation by a geriatric neurologist or psychiatrist to determine fitness to drive. Sometimes the parent will be referred for an actual driving test. Results will be reported to the Tennessee Department of Motor Vehicles if the patient fails and the driving license will be revoked by the state.• If your parent continues to drive when impaired, control access to the car and keys. If he or she insists on carrying a set of car keys, take the keys or replace them with keys that don't work.• If necessary, disable the car by removing a battery wire or ask a mechanic to install a "kill switch" that must be engaged before the car can start.
Helping a Parent Cope
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer a listening ear and let your parent talk about his or her feelings. Losing the car is a tremendous loss for older adults that will take time to grieve.• Arrange for alternate transportation.• Make arrangements for groceries and prescriptions to be delivered if necessary.