



People Caring for People

Central Michigan District Health Department
For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

GOOD DRIVING DEPENDS ON ABILITY, NOT AGE

Studies show that car accidents are more dangerous for adults over the age of 65 than for younger adults. They are more likely to be seriously injured, hospitalized, and killed. For this reason, it is extremely important for seniors to know their driving abilities and how to improve their skills when necessary.

There are many warning signs that you may be experiencing while you drive that put you at risk for a deadly accident. You may have many of these warning signs and not even realize. Think about your typical driving experience. Do any of the following warning signs happen to you?

- Getting lost while driving
- Difficulty seeing road signs
- Difficulty hearing ordinary traffic noises (horns, sirens, etc.)
- Feeling dizzy or drowsy while driving
- Reacting slowly to traffic situations
- Difficulty turning the steering wheel
- Difficulty pressing brake and/or gas pedals
- Difficulty turning neck to see behind you or in blind spots

If any of these things happen to you, don't despair. Not only do many seniors experience these warning signs, but it is possible to correct them with the proper interventions.

Mapping your road trips out a head of time to avoid heavy traffic areas, unfamiliar routes, etc. can significantly decrease the chances of getting lost, becoming confused, or feeling stressed out.

Many times, the inability to read road signs and hear traffic noises is the result of poor vision and hearing. This is easily solved by receiving regular vision and hearing check-ups with your doctor.

There are many types of medications that cause drowsiness or lightheadedness. If you think that your prescription is causing you to feel this way, discuss alternative medications that may not have these side effects with your doctor.

Physical or occupational therapy, or daily exercise can help to strengthen leg, feet, and neck muscles. This will make driving tasks like using the brake pedal, gas pedal, steering wheel, looking behind you and looking in blind spots much easier.



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Other safety precautions that you should always remember include: wearing your seat belt even if your car has airbags, driving the speed limit, staying focused on traffic, and avoiding distractions like talking on your cell phone or eating in the car. You can also take a refresher driving course to brush up on your skills.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.