

Also, senior centers, religious organizations, and other local service groups often offer transportation services for older adults in your community.


### **Who can I call for help with transportation?**


To find transportation services in your area, call the national ElderCare Locator at **800-677-1116** and ask for your local Office on Aging. That office will help you find transportation services in your community. You may also find your local Office on Aging by visiting their Web site at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).


Contact your regional transit authority to find out which bus or train to take. Call Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation) at **800-659-6428** or go to its Web site at [www.easterseals.com/transportation](http://www.easterseals.com/transportation).


### **Where do I find out more about Alzheimer's disease and its treatment?**

Your first step is to talk with your doctor. You also can contact:

 Alzheimer's Association  
**800-272-3900**  
[www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

 Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR)  
**800-438-4380**  
[www.alzheimers.org](http://www.alzheimers.org)

 National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke  
**301-496-5751**  
**800-352-9424**  
[www.ninds.nih.gov](http://www.ninds.nih.gov)

 National Institute on Aging  
[www.nihseniorhealth.gov/alzheimersdisease/toc.html](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov/alzheimersdisease/toc.html)

You also can get a copy of the "Age Page on Older Drivers" from the National Institute on Aging by calling **800-222-2225**, or by going to its Web site at [www.niapublications.org/engagepages/drivers.asp](http://www.niapublications.org/engagepages/drivers.asp).

### **Wear your safety belt**

Always wear your safety belt when you are driving or riding in a car. Make sure that every person who is riding with you also is buckled up. Wear your safety belt even if your car has air bags.

# Driving and Alzheimer's Disease



## **Driving and Alzheimer's Disease**

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For most people, driving represents freedom, control, and independence. Driving enables most people to get to the places they want to go, and to see the people they want to see when they want to see them. But driving is a complex skill. Our ability to drive safely can be compromised by changes in our physical, emotional, mental, and cognitive conditions.

The goal of this brochure is to help you, your family, and your health care professional talk about how Alzheimer's will affect your ability to drive safely.

### **How can having Alzheimer's disease affect my driving?**

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There are some early and clear warning signs that Alzheimer's is affecting your driving. For example, you might:

- Need more help than you used to with directions, or with learning a new driving route;
- Have trouble remembering where you are going, or where you left your car;
- Get lost on routes that were once familiar;
- Have trouble making turns, especially left turns;
- Feel confused when exiting a highway, or by traffic signs such as a four-way stop;
- Receive citations for moving violations;
- Find other drivers often honk their horns at you;
- Stop at a green light, or brake inappropriately;

- Drift out of your lane;
- Have less control over your muscles so it may be harder to push down on the pedals or turn the steering wheel;
- Find dents and scrapes on your car that you can't explain;
- Find that others are questioning your driving safety; and
- Have a hard time controlling your anger, sadness, or other emotions that can affect your driving.

### **What if I am experiencing these warning signs?**

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If you are experiencing warning signs such as those listed above, you should see your physician. If warranted, you might be referred to a driver rehabilitation specialist immediately for an evaluation (see below).

As the disease progresses, driving will become increasingly unsafe. Your doctor can help you decide when you should stop driving.

### **What can I do when Alzheimer's affects my driving?**

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In many communities nationwide, a driver rehabilitation specialist can give you on- and off-road tests to assess your driving. The specialist also can help you determine how your driving ability is changing and help you decide when your driving is no longer safe.

Understanding how your ability to drive is changing over time is important to keep you

and others around you safe. To find a driver rehabilitation specialist near you, go to [www.aota.org/olderdriver](http://www.aota.org/olderdriver) and look up the name of a specialist in your area. You also can call hospitals and rehabilitation facilities to find an occupational therapist with special training in driving skills assessment and remediation. Depending on where you live, you may need to travel to nearby communities to find these services.

### **What can I do when I have to give up driving?**

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You can keep your independence even when you have to stop driving. It may take some planning ahead by you and your family and friends, but that planning will get you to the places you want to go, and to the people you want to see. It may also reduce the stress of driving. Consider:

- ◆ Rides with family and friends;
- ◆ Taxi cabs;
- ◆ Shuttle buses or vans;
- ◆ Public buses, trains, and subways; and
- ◆ Walking.

If possible, ask a relative or companion to accompany you when you use public transportation or walk. That way you can avoid confusion, and be sure to get where you want to go without the risk of getting lost. To address that risk, for a modest, one-time fee you can also enroll in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return™ program by calling 888-572-8566 or [www.alz.org/safereturn](http://www.alz.org/safereturn).