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Road Rage Seniors on the Road

When should someone stop driving? This can be a difficult decision; but sometimes our bodies make the decision for us. By 2030, 85% to 90% of the 70 million Americans, older than 65, are projected to have driver's licenses, according to AAA. There is no magic age at which everyone needs to stop driving; it is a functional and health-related issue, not an age issue. Health conditions that can affect driving include Arthritis (stiffness in joints); muscle weakness; eye conditions; loss of hearing; slower reaction time and reflexes; medication side effects, and dementia. There are certain aspects of driving that cause more problems for older drivers than others, such as left turns and driving at night.

Self-policing is a starting point, as well as family members stepping in to voice concern. It is not an easy conversation, yet an important one. Thirty-six percent of adult children polled by the website [Caring.com](#) and the National Safety Council said that talking to their parents about the need to stop driving would be harder than discussing funeral plans (29 percent) or selling the family home (18 percent). Many families struggle with the issue of when an elderly person should stop driving because it signals a loss of independence, can pose real transportation problems in areas where mass transit is sketchy and can increase depression, experts say.



According to AARP, here are 10 signs that it is time to limit or stop driving:

1. Almost crashing, with frequent close calls.
2. Finding dents or scrapes on the car, or fences, mailboxes & garage doors at home.
3. Getting lost, especially in familiar locations.
4. Having trouble following traffic signals, road signs and pavement markings.
5. Responding more slowly to unexpected situations; trouble moving foot from gas to brake pedal; confusing the two pedals.
6. Misjudging gaps in traffic at intersections and on merging ramps.
7. Experiencing road rage or causing other drivers to honk or complain.
8. Easily becoming distracted or having difficulty concentrating while driving.
9. Having a hard time turning around to check the rear view while backing up or changing lanes.
10. Receiving multiple traffic tickets or warnings from law enforcement officers.

In summary, just as a teen is looking to get independence by obtaining their driver's license; the elderly are trying to hold on to their independence by keeping their driver's license. If someone over the age of 75 is healthy, with no conditions that impair their ability to drive, then there is no discussion. In a 75+ person with history of stroke, heart attack, neuropathy, dementia, or some other health condition that inhibits their ability to drive safely, re-testing and then the discussion to reduce driving time or completely stop should be had. Think of safety first; for the driver and everyone else on the road.



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The following websites were referenced for this article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/18/health/elderly-driving-cars-safety.html>

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/older-drivers>



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