STAY FIT TO DRIVE
The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and its partners, including AAA, AARP and others, know how important it is for drivers of all ages to be safe on Ohio’s roadways. Ohio is committed to helping everyone “stay fit to drive” as they age.

For many Ohioans, driving is a lifeline. Learning to evaluate and review driving skills can help older Ohioans stay independent longer while reducing risks to themselves and others.

Through its Stay Fit to Drive program, ODOT is sharing information about resources and services available to older Ohioans, families and friends, caregivers and others who interact with older road users.

Experts estimate that most older adults will outlive their ability to drive safely by up to 10 years.

There are two kinds of situations that can affect a person’s ability to drive. The first is normal aging. The second is medications and medical conditions.

NORMAL AGING

Normal aging typically involves gradual changes in physical and mental abilities. This can include changes in vision and diminishing ability to see clearly at night; changes in strength, flexibility and reflexes; and minor lapses in memory or temporary confusion.

Older adults often self-regulate themselves to adjust for these changes in abilities by avoiding nighttime driving; compensating for decreased reaction time; traveling during non-peak hours; and planning trips ahead.

Like the rest of the nation, Ohio is getting older.

By 2020, the state will have more than 2.1 million residents who are 65 or older — that’s 18% of Ohio’s population.

Not surprisingly, people age 65 or older represent the fastest-growing segment of drivers. This is one of the reasons Ohio is experiencing an increase in traffic deaths.

One way to analyze driving skills is through self assessment.

There are printed and interactive, online self-assessment tests through AAA, AARP, The Hartford and others. (See the Resources list for details.)
Medications and medical conditions can also affect an older driver’s ability to drive safely.

MEDICATIONS

Overall, older Americans take more medicines than any other portion of the population. This makes it vital to know the effects of medications on driving fitness.

The risk of medication side effects and interactions increases with the number of medications taken. These side effects can influence the ability to drive safely.

TIP

Talk with your doctor, health care provider or pharmacist about your medications and possible impacts on safe driving.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Older Americans also have more chronic conditions than any other portion of the population. A wide range of medical conditions including diabetes, stroke, dementia and others can create serious risks to driving safely.

Older adults with one, or more, suspected or known medical conditions should be referred to and evaluated by a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, occupational therapist or driver rehabilitation specialist for comprehensive clinical and driving evaluations to determine the conditions’ effects on safe driving.

TIP

Be aware, get information and seek help if needed.
Older drivers may decide on their own to “retire from driving.”

Others may decide in partnership with a spouse, adult children, physician or other professional. As with other life changes, planning ahead and being proactive can make the transition easier.

**BE SUPPORTIVE**

Remind your spouse, parent, friend or relative that you are only a phone call away. Help them schedule social activities and appointments and offer to take them.

**ALTERNATIVES TO DRIVING**

You or a loved one may be more comfortable relying less on driving if you know about other ways to get around. This can include public transit, private ride sharing companies such as Uber and Lyft, taking a cab, carpooling, asking a friend or relative for a ride and asking about volunteer drivers at a local senior or community center, church, synagogue, temple or mosque.

**DELIVERY INSTEAD**

If going out to eat or to shop for meals isn’t an option, have them come to you instead.

There are multiple restaurant delivery services around the state. Additionally, some older drivers may be eligible for Meals-on-Wheels, a program that delivers hot meals at a low cost. Check with your local Area Agency on Aging for more information. (See resources)

If delivery is not an option, family, friends or a volunteer from a local senior or community center, could drop them off.

Similarly, order medications by mail or check with your local pharmacy to see if delivery is available.

**TIP**

Stop • Look • Listen • Act

Stop • Don’t scold or harangue an older driver.

Look • Take a ride with the older driver to analyze their safe driving skills as objectively as possible.

Listen • Really listen to and try to understand the older driver’s concerns.

Act • Work together to create a transportation plan for future safety. This may be with a physician, driver rehabilitation specialist or other professional, or among family members.

Several grocery stores in Ohio and many websites offer online shopping and delivery services.
Resources to help stay fit to drive.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**CHORUS**  
Roadway Safety Foundation  
roadsafeseniors.org  
The Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety (CHORUS) website has extensive resources for older road users, their families, friends and caregivers, as well as for law enforcement, health care and other professionals who interact with older road users.

**OLDER ADULTS**

**Roadwise RX, AAA**  
Foundation for Traffic Safety  
roadwisexr.com  
This website lets users type in medications and find out their impacts on driving safely.

**Driver Improvement Courses for Seniors and Online Driver Self Evaluation Tool, AAA**  
seniordriving.aaa.com  
This website provides visitors with useful tips and tools for older road users to evaluate their driving ability, understand the effects of aging, improve their driving skills and maintain their mobility.

**Driver Safety Courses, AARP**  
aarp.org/auto/driver-safety  
On this website visitors learn about and sign up for a driving refresher course specifically for older road users.

**Car Fit, jointly sponsored by AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapists Association**  
car-fit.org  
Learn tips to help older drivers have a better fit in their car and find out about local upcoming Car Fit events to attend in person.

**FAMILY, FRIENDS, CAREGIVERS**

**We Need to Talk, AARP**  
aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/we-need-to-talk  
This online seminar provides information on how to assess an older adult’s driving skills and how to begin the conversation about retirement from driving.

**Multiple Publications, Hartford Advance 50 Team and the MIT AgeLab**  
thehartford.com/mature-market-excellence  
These downloadable guides can help begin and have family conversations about older driver safety.

**Roadwise RX, see above**  
roadwisexr.com
**RESOURCES**

**HEALTH CARE AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS**

Driving Evaluations, American Occupational Therapy Association or Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists

aota.org/older-driver or 301-652-2682
aded.net or 866-672-9466

Find a local driving rehabilitation specialist who can conduct a driver safety evaluation.

- Roadwise RX, see above roadwisexr.com

**TRANSITIONING FROM DRIVING**

Online directory, Ohio Area Agencies on Aging

ohioaging.org/Pages/Area%20Agencies.html

Find a local Area Agency on Aging in Ohio for information about transportation options, Meals-on-Wheels and more in your area.

- Resource Directory for Older People, National Institute on Aging
  Download link: http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS57093 or 800-677-1116
  A comprehensive directory listing organizations that provide services for older people.

- Directory of Transit Systems in Ohio, American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
  apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/Pages/OhioTransitLinks.aspx
  A listing of public transit systems in Ohio.