Medical Conditions and Driving

Medical conditions and medications can affect driving. Older drivers and passengers who are in a vehicle crash have a higher risk of severe injury or death.

Illness, not age, affects the ability to drive safely

Sensory: Illnesses that can affect vision and sensation include:
- Cataracts
- Hearing Loss
- Neuropathy

Motor: Illnesses that can affect motor function include:
- Parkinson’s disease
- Arthritis
- Paralysis, due to a stroke

Cognitive: Illnesses that can affect cognitive functions (e.g., memory, attention, judgement) include:
- Dementia
- Stroke
- Brain injury

Drivers should check with their doctor about side effects of prescriptions or over-the-counter medications that can affect the ability to drive.

Dementia increases the risk

About 1/3 of individuals in the early stages of dementia are safe to drive, so a diagnosis of dementia alone is not enough to take away someone’s license. However, please consider:
- Drivers with dementia are 3.5 times more likely to be in an at-fault collision than healthy drivers.
- Dementia deprives the driver of the awareness of their declining safety.
- All individuals with dementia will become unsafe to drive at some point in their illness.

Most older drivers are safe drivers

Many older drivers can “self-regulate” to keep themselves and others safe. This is because older drivers, as a group:
- Do not drive during rush hour
- Do not drive during inclement weather (rain, snow)
- Restrict highway/freeway driving
- Restrict night driving

Warning signs that driving may have become unsafe

- Is unaware of driving errors
- Gets lost or confused while driving
- Has new or unexplained damage to vehicle
- Straddles lanes, makes wide turns, etc.
- Doesn’t see/obey traffic signs
- Is unable to drive with the flow of traffic

Preparing for driving retirement

Become aware of and familiar with other transportation options in the community.

Driver’s license renewal in Kansas

- It is important to remember driving is a privilege, not a right.
- After age 65, individuals are required to renew their license every 4 years
- Drivers are required to pass a vision test and may also be required to take a written or driving skills test.

To learn more about medical conditions and driver’s license renewals, go to:

KSRevenue.org
785-368-8971

Kansans Traffic Safety Resource Office
KTSRO.org
800-416-2522

7/2017

NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact KSOT in Topeka, Kansas, Community Building, 111 SW 15th Street 2nd Floor West, Topeka, KS 66602, by phone: (785) 296-5000, or email: KSOT@ks.gov, or use TDD/Relay: 711.