

Information for older drivers is newest topic on NIHSeniorHealth site

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The National Institutes of Health today unveiled a new online resource for older drivers and families seeking information on an often sensitive topic: Is it still safe to drive? Developed by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) at NIH and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Older Drivers topic offers up-to-date information on how aging may affect driving, including physical changes, safety issues and ways older drivers can cope when driving skills change.

The new topic is available at nihseniorhealth.gov/olderdrivesaffectsdriving/01.html.

"Driving is a complex task, requiring good vision and hearing, accurate speed-distance judgments and quick reaction times, among other skills," says NIA director Richard J. Hodes, M.D. "Age-related changes affecting some of these skills can make certain driving tasks especially hard for older drivers, which is why this new web resource is so important."

Age-related changes vary widely from one person to the next, and some people can continue to drive much longer than others. Still, for many older adults, making left turns, changing lanes and navigating through intersections can be challenging, and driving errors made during these times can lead to crashes, often with serious consequences.

"No matter how experienced the driver, getting older can limit an

individual's reaction time in emergency situations. That's why it makes sense for older drivers to sharpen their skills and learn ways to help adjust for age-related changes in vision, hearing and response time," said David L. Strickland, NHTSA administrator. "Taking the necessary precautions to avoid potentially hazardous situations is one way older drivers can keep their independence and drive safely while doing it."

The new Older Drivers topic serves as an important online resource, with safety tips, recommendations about preferred travel lanes, braking and left turns. It also offers suggestions for adjusting driving habits when there are changes in hearing, vision and reaction times. Information about refresher courses, vehicle safety, regulations that affect [older drivers](#) and alternative means of transportation is also provided.

NIHSeniorHealth is a premier health and wellness website designed especially for older adults by NIA and the National Library of Medicine (NLM). In addition to information on driving, the site provides a comprehensive collection of research-based health information aimed at older adults that includes exercise and physical activity, safe use of medicines and management of diseases such as stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's.

NIHSeniorHealth also has senior-friendly features such as large print and opened-captioned videos to make the information on the site easy to see, understand and navigate. Recently redesigned for today's [older adults](#), who have some experience using the Internet to search for health information, NIHSeniorHealth now features a search function that offers users easier access to senior-related health [information](#) on this and other government websites.

Provided by National Institutes of Health

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