



FEATURE ARTICLE FROM **Always Best Care**

Should Your Aging Parent Still Be Driving?

Driving is one of the freedoms that teenagers can't wait to get, and one that seniors are reluctant to give up. It is a source of independence and control over their lives because they can go anywhere they want, whenever they want. But many family members become more worried as their parents age, wondering whether it is still safe for them to be driving.

There is no magical cut-off age for driving; it's a matter of whether your loved one is both physically and mentally fit to continue doing so. Some people may drive into their 90s, while others have the keys taken away much earlier. This can be a tough but necessary conversation to have with your aging parent.

Before you decide that once your loved one hits a certain age they should hand over the keys, here are a few things to consider:

- How is their vision? Are they able to easily read road signs, see traffic lights, and identify hazards?
- How is their reaction time? Are they able to quickly respond if they need to apply the brakes or speed up to safely enter the flow of traffic?
- Do they become [confused, lost, or distracted](#) easily?
- Are there dents, dings, or scratches on the car where they have had run-ins with stationary (or moving) objects?

Go for a ride along with them. See how well they are able to maneuver the car and follow the rules of the road. Do they abide by the speed limit? Are they driving safely? Do they remember how to get where they are going, or are they able to follow directions to get there? Don't criticize them while they are driving, but be a constant observer. Jot down a few notes so you can make comparisons a few weeks or months later when you ride with them again. This can help you to notice any changes you may not have realized at first.

Also, talk with your senior about their driving. Ask if they still feel safe and confident in their abilities, or if they have any concerns. You can also talk to their physician and gain their input as far as physical and mental fitness are concerned.

Making a Decision

If you feel that your loved one is unsafe behind the wheel, it is important to talk to them. You don't want to put their life or the lives of others at risk. Discuss your concerns with them and what you have noticed. Remember that this can be a sensitive subject – asking them to give up

driving can be life-changing. Make sure you are prepared with alternative options for how they can get around and meet their needs. Find others who are willing to share transportation responsibilities. Help your loved one to see that you have their best interest in mind and will do whatever you can to support them.

An [in-home caregiver](#) can help make the transition easier by assisting with coordinating trips or making sense of transportation schedules, accompanying seniors on outings, overseeing home deliveries, dropping off or picking up prescriptions or dry cleaning, and many other tasks so seniors who are not able to drive themselves do not become problematic. [Always Best Care](#) offers a wide range of support services for seniors to help them age in place more safely and comfortably. Call (855) 470-2273 to schedule a free consultation.