



Elder Care at Home

Driving Safety Tips: What to do if Your Loved One Has Dementia

A driving evaluation can be done to assess your loved one's capabilities. Usually this assessment is done in the early stages of memory loss. Several local organizations can perform the evaluation including the [Memory and Wellness Center at FAU](#). But how do you know when it's time for an evaluation?



Signs to Watch Out For

If your loved one shows these signs, it may be time for a driving evaluation:

- Gets lost or disoriented easily and frequently
- Loses his or her coordination more often
- Experiences an increase in memory loss
- Has become less alert and aware of things going on around them
- Has difficulty processing information
- Is dependent upon personal care
- Experienced a decrease in problem-solving skills

If your loved one is still driving, be aware of some warning signs including:

- Drives slowly
- Has minor accidents
- Is getting ticketed or frequently
- Has difficulty with turns or merging on to busy highways
- Does not signal or does so incorrectly
- Becomes drowsy when driving
- Uses poor judgment
- Stops the car at inappropriate times
- Drifts into other lanes or makes dangerous mistakes (e.g. driving on the wrong side of the street)

If you feel that your loved one is endangering themselves, then you should try your hardest to convince them to resort to public or paid transportation or having a family member drive them. This situation can be difficult since driving is generally equated with independence. If your loved one is not receptive to the idea, then you may have to resort to more drastic measures, like hiding their car keys, disabling or getting rid of their car, or moving the car out of sight. These may seem like harsh tactics, but preserving the health of your loved one and that of the surrounding community outweigh the costs of this difficult situation.

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