

The Driver's Seat

**A Driving Wellness Resource for
Older Adults, Caregivers and
Practitioners in Grey-Bruce**

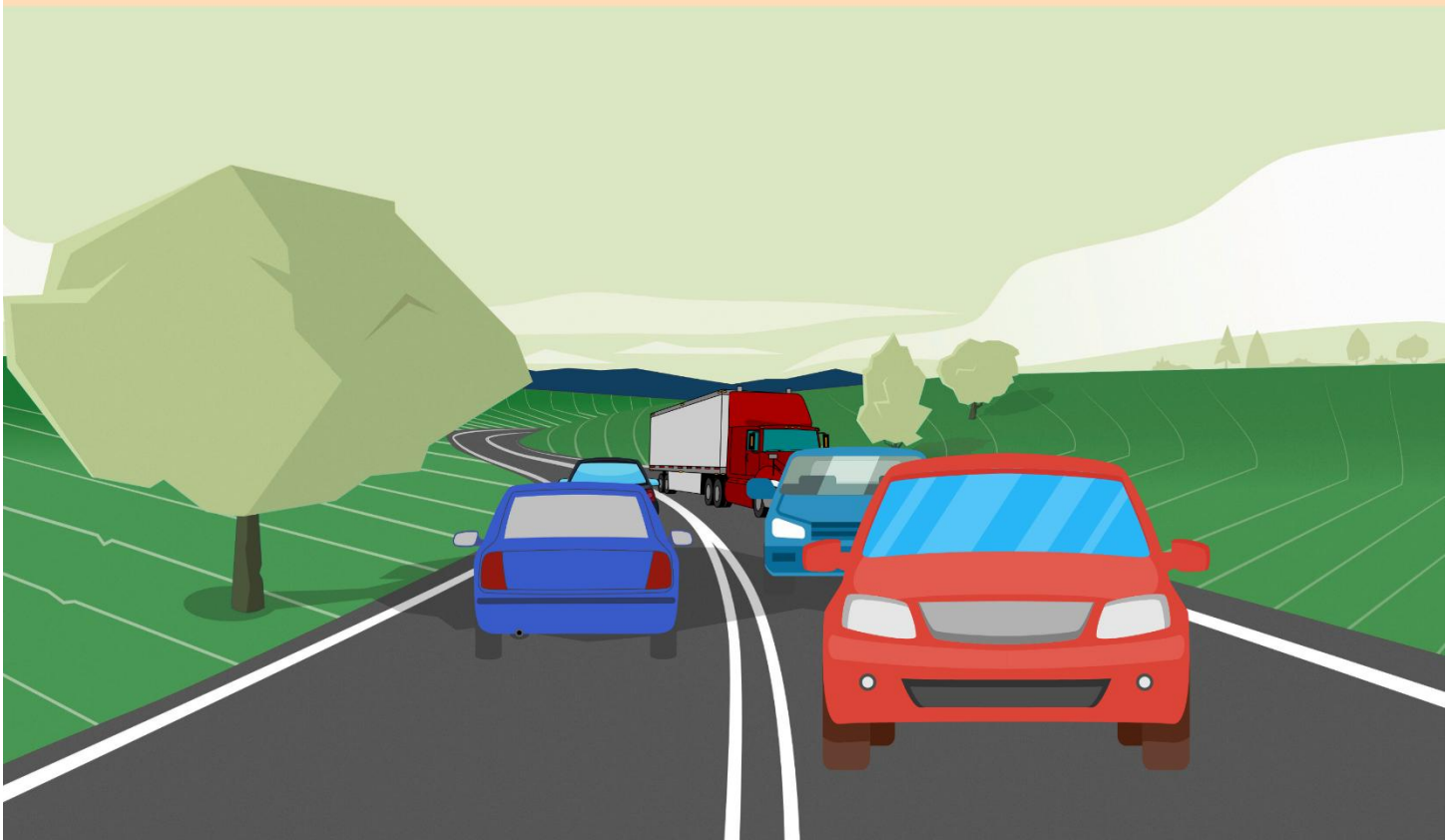


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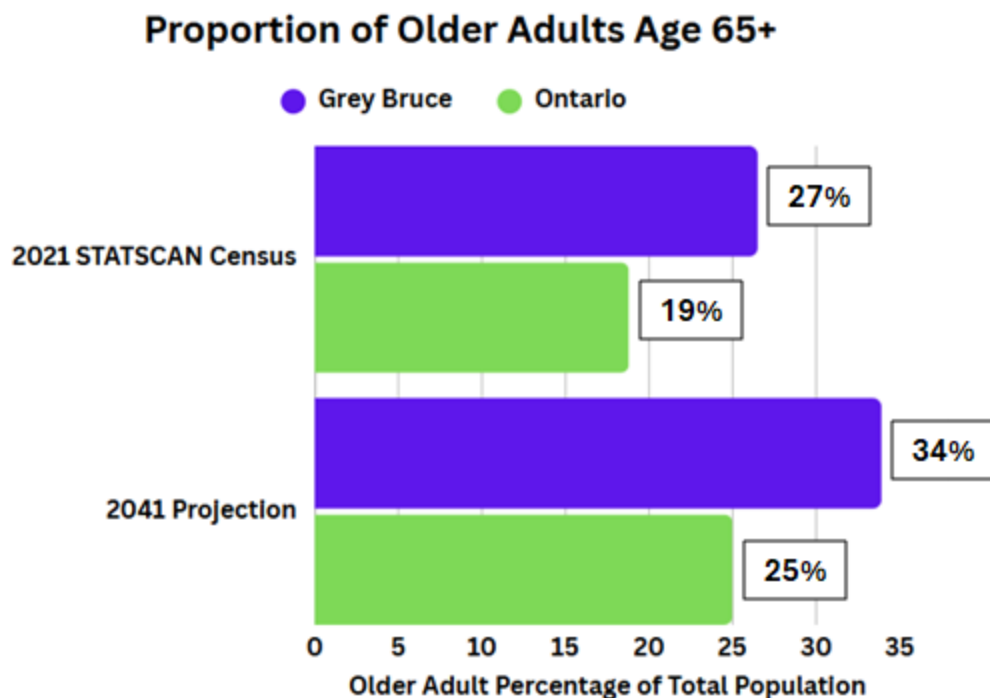
Background

The Regional Geriatric Program of Southwestern Ontario's Grey-Bruce Design and Implementation Working Group (GB D&I WG) brings together dedicated clinicians, leaders and caregiving partners from various sectors that share a passion for older adult wellness. It was through feedback from these partners that the gap of consistent, general driving resources for older adults in Grey and Bruce Counties was identified.

The sub-working group has prioritized the creation of a resource package focused on promoting wellness among older adults. This initiative adopts a positive and practical approach to disseminating driving information and resources within Grey-Bruce.

Relevance

Canada's older adults' population is growing and living longer than ever before. Although aging alone is not a sole catalyst for concerns related to driving wellness, a road safety report by Transport Canada reports older adults typically live with multiple health issues that can impact driving wellness¹, including various medical conditions and functional impairments, often which require medications or treatments that can also impact driving wellness.



With a disproportionately higher population of older adults in Grey-Bruce than the Ontario average, driving wellness and safety have become increasingly important topics to review². As people age, they may experience changes in their health and/or wellness that impact their ability to operate a vehicle safely. This document takes a positive, practical stance on planning for your driving future, for all older adults. The information in this package is to be used as a tool to bring awareness of the many considerations of driving for older adults, help to avoid critical accidents, maintain driving wellness and to plan for when it is time to hang up the keys.

Purpose

The purpose of this Driving Wellness document is to give older adults, caregivers and healthcare practitioners in Grey and Bruce counties a proactive driving wellness resource package to help support driving concerns in a way that is both simple and practical. This package was intentionally designed to address common issues faced by older adults and driving, through a quick reference format where possible. **This is for all older adults and caregivers in Grey Bruce regardless of diagnosis, driving wellness impacts people with many conditions.**

How to use this resource

The Driver's Seat is a driving wellness package that has **a collection of resources, tips, tools and contact information** to support driving wellness for older adults living in Grey and Bruce counties. To use effectively, review its content entirely or select a section on its own. It was written and intended to be used by the public, older adults, their care partners, or any health care professional. Whether you are an older adult, caregiver or a healthcare provider, this package can be used to:

- Educate yourself/others about the various aspects of Driving Wellness
- Review legal considerations related to older adults and driving
- Consider how to have conversations with another about driving concerns
- Utilize practical tools to assess driving wellness and aid in planning for retirement from driving
- Identify local resources to support driving wellness or alternatives to driving

When possible, content was structured to be single-page documents for ease of use. If you have any questions regarding the content, please reach out to the person or organization listed within that section for further information. You can also reach out to a trusted health care professional to determine how it may relate to you, your care partner(s) and your unique situation.

Acknowledgements

The Driver's Seat resource package was created by the Regional Geriatric Program of Southwestern Ontario (RGPSWO) Grey-Bruce Design and Implementation Working Group. Special thanks to the sub-working group committee:

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We would also like to acknowledge the broader Grey-Bruce Design and Implementation Working Group for their valuable input in support of developing this resource package.

Additional resources and using QR codes

Although there is a lot of great information within this package that can be useful when thinking about driving wellness, you may want to explore more information or resources.

Throughout this document, there are additional resources that have been included for your reference. If you are viewing this document online, or in a soft copy, you will be able to click on links that will take you to these resources. However, if you are reviewing this resource in paper or hard copy, and you wish to review these additional resources, you will need to scan the QR codes that have been provided to help navigate you to these resources.

If you are unfamiliar with QR codes, don't worry! This document will walk you through what a QR code is and how to use it. We know that with technology there are also risks. Inside this document you will also see that it gives some practical tips and advice to watch out for with QR code scams and what to do should you suspect fraud or a scam.

What is a QR code?

A **QR code** (short for "quick response" code) is a type of barcode that can be scanned with a smartphone or tablet.

How to scan a QR code

1. Open your phone's camera app

- Most smartphones can scan a QR code directly using the camera.

2. Point the camera at the QR code

- Make sure the code is clearly visible on your screen.

3. Wait for a notification or link to appear

- A pop-up should appear with a website link or action.

4. Tap the notification

- This will take you to the linked content or website.

Potential risks of QR code

While QR codes are convenient, they can also be used by scammers to trick people into visiting fake websites or downloading harmful software.

Potential risks:

- **Fake websites:** Some QR codes lead to websites that look real but are designed to steal your personal information.
- **Malware downloads:** A QR code may prompt you to download an app or file that harms your device.
- **Payment scams:** Scammers can replace real QR codes (e.g., at a parking meter or on a donation poster) with their own codes to steal money.



How to spot a QR code scam

Before using a QR code, it is okay to pause and reflect. There are some key steps you can take to help you detect if the code is legitimate, or the product of a scam.

- **Check the context:** Is the QR code in a place you trust (like a store or official government location)?
- **Look for tampering:** Is the code a sticker placed over another one?
- **Be cautious of urgent messages:** Scams often create a sense of urgency (e.g., “Scan now or lose access!”).
- **Preview the link:** Some phones show the website address before opening it—check if it looks legitimate.
- **Don’t enter personal info:** Never provide passwords, banking info, or your Social Insurance Number (SIN) through a site accessed by a QR code unless you’re sure it’s legitimate.

If you suspect a QR code scam

In Canada, you can report it to:

- **Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC)³:**
Website: www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca
Toll-Free: 1-888-495-8501
- **Your local police service**
Especially if money or personal information has been stolen.
- **Your bank or credit card company**
If you entered financial details on a suspicious site.



Final tips for staying safe

- **Only scan codes from trusted sources.**
- **Use your device's built-in QR scanner when possible.**
- **Install antivirus software** on your phone if available.
- **Update your device regularly** to stay protected from security threats.

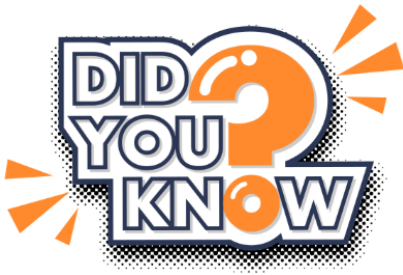
Have questions or need help?

Ask a family member, friend, or librarian, for support.

Driving wellness: it's in your hands

Take charge of your health and wellness to help you maintain your ability to drive safely.

Your health, wellbeing, daily activities and choices directly affect your driving skills. By staying active, maintaining your health and regularly evaluating your driving abilities, you can continue to drive safely and confidently. Remember, your wellness is key to keeping you on the road – take care of your driving wellness today.



On average, a driver makes approximately 30-40 decisions per kilometer!

Driving ability versus driving safety: It's not the same

While driving ability requires a driver to have the basic skills and fitness to operate a vehicle, driving safety is more complex. Driving safety involves a range of factors that impact your safety and the safety of others on the road.

Safe driving includes:





- Being alert
- Following traffic laws
- Adjusting your driving based on weather, road conditions and traffic



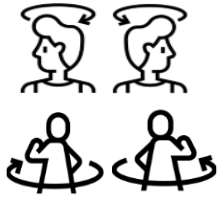





As a 'well' driver, you are responsible for operating your vehicle, exercising good judgement and making responsible choices. You take actions to protect yourself, your passengers and others on the road. Choose driving situations that match your skills and comfort level. By understanding and respecting your limits and capabilities, you can drive safely and confidently.

Strategies for maintaining driving wellness

As we age, changes in our health can impact our ability to drive safely. It's important to eat well, stay active, avoid smoking and get regular health check-ups. See below how your health may change as you age and what you can do about it to remain safe while driving. This document can be a great resource for those who are still driving or for those who wish to return to driving.⁵

Health tips	Description	What can you do?	If challenges persist
General	Set yourself and your environment up for success! Know the updated rules of the road. Some driving schools offer refresher courses for a fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease distractions (radio), conversations Plan your route ahead Consider the role of vehicle sensors and how they may be distracting Stay alert, avoid driving when feeling unwell (pain, emotional, tired...) 	Talk to a trusted friend, family member, and/or your care provider to discuss your concerns.
Vision 	As you age, there is a higher risk of eye disease which can affect your vision. Your ability to see at night or manage glare may be reduced. Also, our field of view may be smaller.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear your visual aids Limit driving at night or on rainy days Scan your environment: use your body and turn your head to do a full blind spot check Avoid busy or construction areas (if possible) 	Book an appointment with an optometrist or eye doctor to have your vision evaluated. Note some testing may be covered and some may cost additional fees.
Hearing 	Aging can affect your ability to hear and respond to alerts (emergency vehicles, horns...) while on the road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly scan your surroundings Reduce distractions 	Book an appointment to have your hearing tested. Some places offer free audiology evaluations.
Physical 	With age, your mobility may decrease, and you may have increased pain. Both can affect control of the vehicle and decrease brake reaction time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay physically active (see exercises below) Actively take part in local exercise programs Adjust mirrors to adapt to posture changes Listen to your body and if you feel unwell, consider alternative driving solutions 	Book an appointment with your doctor, physical or occupational therapist.
Brain 	Some medical conditions, pain, mood and medications may affect your alertness, judgement, memory, emotions and ability to process what you see, and your reaction time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your brain active (see exercises below) Speak to your pharmacist and stay up to date with medications and understand their effects on your body 	Talk to your physician or care team to evaluate your memory and thinking skills. Consider signing up for a memory clinic.

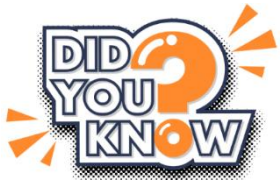
Exercises for maintaining driving wellness

Exercises	What can you do?	How is this related to driving?
Flexibility	<p>1. Turn head to the right and left.</p> <p>2. Turn body to the right and left.</p> 	Practice a blind spot check with hands on steering wheel. For example, sitting down, turn head and body to one side and then the other while arms stay still.
Strength lower body	<p>Lower body: while sitting with feet in front lift toes up, repeat. While sitting, lift one knee up towards your belly button.</p> 	Practice pressing the gas and brake pedals.
Strength upper body	<p>Upper body: while sitting or standing, lift arms up and around, pretend to draw large letters on a chalkboard (write your name or go through the alphabet), with one arm, the other and both.</p> 	Practice putting seat belt on, turning the steering wheel by holding a paper plate and doing a hand-over-hand turning of the plate within your hands.
Coordination	<p>Tapping game: create a sequence of movements and repeat them, now challenge yourself and reverse the order and speed things up or add music (i.e. Tap your nose, clap your hands 4 times, hug yourself, tap your heels together).</p> <p>Dance, learn new moves and combinations.</p> 	Practice operating different tasks related to driving such as turning on turn signal while checking for blind spots and maneuvering a turn.
Brain wellness	<p>It is important to sleep well, challenge your brain, be social, exercise, and eat a balanced diet. Learn something new (i.e. read an article, listen to a story, play memory games or do puzzles...).</p> <p>Do word or number puzzles, go bird watching and track birds in the sky, do mental math, memorize recipes, or phone numbers.</p> 	Practicing thinking tasks helps with the skills required when driving to be able to pay attention and react safely to constantly changing situations when driving. For example, navigating safe lanes changes and anticipating a safe distance when turning.
Overall	<p>Be an active passenger. When sitting in the passenger seat, look around and observe your environment.</p> 	Practice checking blind spots, anticipating turns, looking around.

Family driving DDiscussions

Talking about driving can be a difficult thing, especially when wanting to talk to a loved one about concerns related to driving wellness and safety. Who is the best person to have these conversations? Where can you start? What can you say?

In this section, you will find some practical tips and tools to help guide these conversations, as well as some links for additional information and resources to access.⁶



- **More than 50% of older adults who had conversations with loved ones related to concerns about their driving wellness followed recommendations.**
- **44% of adults who discussed an older relatives' driving concerns with them, said the conversation went better than expected.**

It is important to start having conversations about driving **early and often** to help establish it as a casual conversation topic; even before issues arise⁷.

Consider the question:

“Would I feel comfortable with this person driving with my child in their car”?

This is often the first time that a family member reflects on their feelings related to driving wellness and safety of older adults in their lives. Although initial conversations may be unpleasant to have, that not having these conversations and risking accidents, and injury or even death is worse.

Who should have this conversation?

In a recent study, older adults ranked who they would like to hear from most when discussing concerns related to their driving⁷. The results were as follows:



1. Spouse (men prefer this more than women)
2. Child(ren)
3. Police officer
4. Doctor/healthcare professional (unless there are health related concerns, then they prefer to hear from a doctor second only to a spouse).
5. Close friend
6. Sibling

The top 3 reasons that an older adult would trust these people when discussing their driving concerns were because they⁶:

- ✓ Had the best interest of the older adult at heart (57%)
- ✓ Knows whether or not the older adult is physically capable of being a good, safe driver (52%)
- ✓ Sees the older adult driving and is riding with them regularly (43%)

Where to start?

It may seem simple but **start with heart!**



Take some time to consider what you know about the person you wish to have a conversation with. What is the best way to approach them? Is there someone in their life that would be a good person to have these conversations?

One opportunity is to use examples to start conversations such as:

- Near misses. “Driving isn’t what it used to be” (general talk about increased traffic, road conditions etc.)
- Car accidents or examples found in the news. “Did you hear about the car accident in the news today?”
- Changes in wellness. “Health and safety first” (put driving in the larger context of wellness/safety concerns to make it less person-centered).
- Personal reflections. “How did Grandad stop driving?”⁸



REMINDER: It is important to **stick with facts** when using these examples.

In addition to these examples for conversation, there are several tools available to support practical considerations where driving safety is concerned. These tools range from: planning from retiring from driving, driver planning agreements, dementia and driving conversation planning worksheets, transportation cost worksheets, alternative transportation planning and more. Please see the additional resources at the end of this document for links and full details.

Remember, effective conversations happen early, often, and involve future planning!

Things to consider...

Sometimes, these conversations can bring up various emotions like sadness, fear, anger, frustration, hopelessness or even grief. This is completely understandable and can even be expected.

Driving can represent a large source of independence for people and for some, it is a large part of their identity. It is important to validate these emotions and confirm that they are normal feelings to have. Processing these emotions can take time, and the way these feelings are processed can look different for everyone⁹.

If these emotions/feelings are becoming overwhelming, and are more that you can support alone, are impacting quality of life, or straining relationships, please reach out to some local and provincial support resources listed below.



Do you have a primary care provider / family doctor? Ask if through them, you have access to social work, or other support!	
Mental Health Navigation, Brightshores Health System	(519) - 376 - 3303
Canadian Mental Health Association of Grey-Bruce	(519) - 371 - 3642
Alzheimer Society of Grey-Bruce	(519)-376-7230
Farmer's Wellness Initiative	1-866-267-6255
Suicide Crisis Helpline	9-8-8

Please consider offering to support an older adult in making the phone call for this, or any additional resources they may be seeking.





Do I have a responsibility to report my concerns about someone's ability to drive safely? If so, to whom?

If you have concerns about someone's driving, it is better to err on the side of caution and report those concerns to someone as, depending on circumstances, you may have some legal responsibility if an accident happens. Report to different people depending on the status of the person's driver's licence. Please see below for more details¹².

- If concerns about driving **have not been reported to the MTO**, contact a medical professional with a duty to report driving concerns to the MTO duties (doctor, nurse practitioner, occupational therapist, optometrist)¹².
- If a medical report **has been sent to the MTO**, and you are waiting to hear from the MTO about the status of the driver's licence, please contact the local police service if you are concerned about the person's ability to drive safely¹².
- If the driver's licence **has been suspended by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO), and the person continues to drive**, please contact the local police service¹².

More information: For more practical tools to help support conversations and future planning, please see the Additional Resources page of this document.

Tips for preparing to talk with a doctor or nurse about driving wellness concerns

<p style="text-align: center;">Preparing for the appointment</p>	<p>List and prioritize your concerns (pick 2-3 questions or concerns that you want to talk about with the doctor most)</p> <p>Share any symptoms/behaviours you notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are they consistent? ▪ Are there certain things that make these symptoms/behaviours worse? ▪ Are they affecting daily activities? ▪ How are these concerns impacting driving wellness?
	<p>Share the information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to keep track if there are recurring issues. Bring this information with you to the appointment to help with your discussion so you can be clear about what and how often things happen. ▪ Remember, when it comes to wellness, it is not just physical; mental and emotional wellness are also important! ▪ Or, if you are unable to speak freely to the physician, send a letter/note ahead of time. Connect with the health care provider ahead of time to see how they would like to receive this information.
	<p>Plan to attend in person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer to drive the older adult to the appointment if possible. ▪ Request a translation service if one if needed for the older adult or caregiver ahead of time. ▪ Having a second set of ears is a helpful thing for an older adult when having a medical discussion. Bring a notebook to help write things down. ▪ If, as you discuss the driving wellness concerns, the doctor thinks the older adult should no longer be driving, it is helpful to have a friend or family member there. ▪ The older adult may be asked to complete some testing. Have what is needed to set them up for success (hearing devices/aids/pocket talkers, glasses/visual aids).
<p style="text-align: center;">At the appointment</p>	<p>Be sure the older adult can see and hear as well as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is important to make sure everyone can have a good discussion with the doctor. Being able to see and hear as well as possible is important. ▪ Be ready to write down any important or key messages provided.¹⁰

Assessing driving skills

Your health can change over time, and it is important to monitor how you feel before getting behind the wheel. Mobility, medications, memory, vision, hearing and mood can impact your driving wellness.

Use this checklist to review your driving wellness. Checking in with your wellness to drive:

Do I feel confident when I drive?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I turn my head to back up?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I feel I can focus well enough to drive?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I see well at night? (Night driving only)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I hear other vehicles? (Horns, sirens)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I easily adjust my mirrors, seat, and see over the steering wheel?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I clean off my car in the winter?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can I easily navigate myself to where I need to go?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I feel confident driving at the speed limit?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I feel confident that I know all the road signs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I feel I'm in the right mindset to drive?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “No”, consider not driving at this time.

“Red flags” that your driving skills have changed:

Difficulty parking within a parking space?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Hitting curbs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Confusion at intersections or roundabouts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Stopping in traffic and unsure what to do?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
More than 2 accidents or near-misses in the last year?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Getting lost in familiar places?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Using a passenger to tell you where to go?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Multiple scratches, dents on the car, garage or mailbox?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Already limiting your driving to daytime and only good weather?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Struggling to go between the brake and gas with one foot?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Slower to react to lights, signs and traffic?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Am I dizzy or lightheaded today?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I have any blurred vision?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “Yes”, please do not drive and speak with a health care provider.

If there are concerns, speaking to your doctor or a health care provider is a good first step for further assessment. A reminder that at some point we will all need to limit or retire from driving, and it is our responsibility to keep ourselves and others safe on the road.

Functional driving assessment

A functional driving assessment is an evaluation that helps determine if a person can safely operate a vehicle. You will be required to schedule a functional driving assessment if you have been referred by a member of your medical team. If you are preparing for a functional driving assessment in Grey Bruce, here is a list of things to consider:



Why	The purpose of the assessment is to determine if you can safely operate a vehicle. This assessment may be necessary if you have a medical condition, have been involved in a collision, or there are other concerns about your ability to drive.
Who	The assessment is typically conducted by a trained driving evaluator. A referral from your doctor may be required to schedule an assessment.
What	The assessment will evaluate your physical, cognitive, and visual abilities as they relate to driving. The assessment includes activities that measure attention, concentration, memory, decision-making, perception, motor skills, problem solving, reaction time, and coordination. You may have an on-road evaluation in a controlled environment. Cost of assessment is a minimum of \$600. Reach out to a local assessment center for full cost details.
Where	The Grey-Bruce assessment centre is operated by Closing the Gap 519-370-2165 (press 2 for therapy in home). There is a waitlist for this assessment in Grey Bruce, therefore you may want to consider assessment centres outside of Grey Bruce. Click on the following link which will take you to a listing of approved functional assessment centres . You may want to add your name to the cancellation list if appropriate. Please note, Closing the Gap is not the same as the DriveTest Centre ¹¹ .
When	Schedule the assessment for a time when you are well-rested and able to focus. Ensure you allow enough time for the evaluation, as it may take several hours.
How	Ensure you are meeting the requirements for your specific assessment by following the instructions provided by the assessment center and bring all relevant documents and information.

Questions to consider when scheduling your functional driving assessment

- If my driver's licence is not valid, can I practice driving for the assessment?
- What can I prepare ahead of time?
- How do I complete the on-road assessment if the Ministry of Transportation has suspended my drivers' licence?
- For the on-road portion, do I drive my own vehicle?
- How long is the wait time?
- What is the cost for the assessment?
- Should I drive to the assessment on my own, or should I bring someone with me?
- When do I find out the results of my assessment, and how quickly do I get my licence back?
- What are the potential outcomes of the assessment?
- If I do not pass the assessment, do I get my money back?
- How often do I have to repeat this assessment?

Please consider reviewing the Driving Wellness Strategies and Exercises section of this document.

Review the rules of the road. It is important to be honest and open during the assessment, so the evaluator can accurately determine your abilities. Know that if your licence has been suspended or you have been asked not to drive that evaluators are aware and will take that into consideration.

Legal issues

Ontario's driver licensing system

Driver's licences in Ontario come from an Ontario government department called the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO). MTO gives people different kinds of driver's licences for different kinds of things people drive that have motors in them. For example, there are special driver's licences for driving motorcycles and buses.

The most common kind of driver's licence in Ontario is a "G" licence. People can drive most kinds of motorized things with a G licence, such as a car, small van, and small truck.

Ontario law says that MTO may treat drivers differently based on their age and kind of driver's licence. MTO may tell drivers they must do things to keep their driver's licence when they reach a certain age. The activities that drivers have to do to keep their driver's licences and the age they must do those activities are based on the kind of driver's licence MTO gave them¹².



→ Ontario laws says that once people reach **age 80**, they may be forced to do any of the activities in the bulleted list below **every two years to keep their G driver's licence**.

→ If someone with **any kind of driver's licence age 70 and older has a driving accident**, MTO may force them to do any of the activities in the bulleted list below to keep their driver's licence.

- Driving test
- Test about driving rules
- Medical and physical tests of their health
- Prove that they do not have an illness, disability, or addiction that will likely significantly affect their ability to drive safely

Reporting health concerns with driving to MTO



One of MTO's jobs is to make sure people who are too unwell to drive do not have a driver's licence. To help MTO do this job, Ontario law says that doctors, nurse practitioners, and optometrists **must** give some information about their patients to MTO.

Small or slow changes in abilities related to aging do not have to be reported to MTO. However, doctors and nurse practitioners **must** tell MTO about every person they see for health care aged 16 or older who **has, or appears to have**, any of the following six problems.

1. Illness that causes **cognitive impairment** (thinking problems)
 - +
 - Problems with **any** of the following: attention, judgment, problem solving, planning, sequencing, memory, insight, reaction time, visuospatial perception
 - +
 - Major trouble with looking after themselves like bathing and dressing
2. Illness that causes a medium or high risk of **sudden incapacitation** (person suddenly cannot use their body)
3. Illness causing **severe motor impairment** (major problems with movement)
 - +
 - Problems with **any** of the following: coordination, muscle strength and control, flexibility, motor planning, touch, positional sense
4. Some **eyesight problems** that cannot be fixed (**optometrists** must also report this problem)
5. **Uncontrolled use** of alcohol, recreational drugs, cannabis, prescription medications +
Not taking treatments offered for this substance use
6. Mental illness causing problems **right now** with understanding what is real and what is not real
 - or**
 - plan to kill themselves using a vehicle
 - or**
 - plan to hurt other people using a vehicle

Doctors, nurse practitioners, and optometrists do **not** have to tell MTO about these six situations if the situation is very short term and is not expected to happen again

Sometimes health care workers might be worried about someone's driving even if the person does not have these six problems. Ontario law says that some health care workers are allowed to tell MTO their concerns about someone's driving even if the person does not want the health care worker to give this information to MTO. Doctors, nurse practitioners, optometrists, and occupational therapists **may** give MTO information about people they see to give health care aged 16 or older if the person:

i) has, or appears to have, an illness, eyesight problem, or problem with their body working

+

ii) the illness/problem might make it dangerous to drive

Legal risks of driving if a health care worker says someone should not drive

A person with a driver's licence may drive until they are told by MTO that they cannot drive. However, it is a good idea for the driver to stop driving right away when a doctor, nurse practitioner, optometrist or occupational therapist says they are worried about the person's driving.

- MTO will be **less likely to let the driver keep their driver's licence** if they have an accident after one of these health care workers told them that they were concerned about the person's driving.
- Anytime someone has an accident while driving they **could be charged with a crime or could be sued**. Courts might treat a driver more harshly who is sued or charged with a crime for an accident if the driver was told they should not drive for medical reasons and they ignored that advice.
- The driver's **insurance company might not pay them any money** if they are in an accident after they were told there were medical concerns about their driving if the driver did not tell the insurance company the medical advice they were given before the accident happened.



If a driver is wondering if there are any problems with their driver's licence, they can contact MTO's Driver Control Section at 1-800-303-4933.

What happens when MTO gets a health care worker's report

1. MTO will get in touch with the driver to tell the driver if they have to do something to keep their driver's licence. MTO will usually send a letter to the person's address on their driver's licence.

MTO might say:

- stop driving right now and do some things to get driver's licence back
- can still drive but must do some things by a certain date or licence will be cancelled
- do not have to do anything to keep driving
- licence is cancelled and driver cannot get it back

Note: Everyone in Ontario must keep their address up to date with MTO. People who do not get letters from MTO because they did not update their address with MTO could be in legal trouble.

2. If MTO has said a driver must do something by a certain date, contact MTO right away if the action cannot be done by the date set by MTO. Ask MTO for more time to do what MTO wants. For example, if MTO wants a driving test but there are no test appointments open right now, ask MTO for more time to take the driving test.

Drivers should contact **MTO's Driver Medical Review Office** if they have questions about MTO making a decision about their driver's licence because of their health.

Phone: 1-800-268-1481

Fax: 1-800-304-7889

Email: drivermedicalreview@ontario.ca

Website: www.ontario.ca/page/medical-review-ontario-drivers

3. Sometimes MTO will send another letter asking for more information or activities after getting the information listed in the first letter MTO sent the driver. The driver must do whatever MTO says in all letters sent to the driver to keep their driver's licence or get their licence back unless they appeal MTO's decision and win the appeal.

How to appeal MTO's decision



Drivers can appeal MTO's decision saying that they must do things to keep their driver's licence because of their health. They can also appeal MTO's decision that they cannot drive anymore because of their health. Appeals are decided by an organization called the Licence Appeal Tribunal – General Service ("LAT-GS").

An appeal can be started any time after a driver gets a decision about their driver's licence from MTO. The driver must give certain forms to the LAT-GS to start an appeal.

Drivers should contact the LAT-GS to get more information about how to appeal a decision from MTO about their driver's licence; see below for contact information.

- Phone: 1-888-444-0240
- TTY: 1-844-650-2819
- Email: LATRegistrar@ontario.ca
- Website: <https://tribunalsontario.ca/lat-gs/application-and-hearing-process/#panel1>

More Information

This information was written by Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic in July 2025 to give general legal information. Talk to a lawyer about what the law means for you and if there have been any updates to the law since this information was written. You may contact Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic if you need help to find a lawyer.

Phone: 519-370-2200, ext. 21

Email: general@gbclc.clcj.ca

Website: <https://www.gblegalclinic.com/>

Exploring alternatives to driving

This worksheet is intended to help you or a loved one gain understanding of their driving habits to help create a personal transportation plan.

Reflect on your current driving habits:

When do I usually drive? _____

Where am I going? _____

What am I doing there? _____

Who goes with me? _____

Why do I feel I need to drive? _____

What are my options?

- Explore local public transportation options, see the options listed below.
- Home delivery; many local pharmacies, grocery stores and restaurants offer delivery. Call and ask!
- Consider home delivery meal kits, Meals on Wheels, produce delivery box
- Bring the service to you; many hairdressers or foot care nurses make home visits, ask!
- Can it be done by telephone or email? Save the trip if you can.
- Ask someone you know. Would a friend, family member, or neighbor give you a ride?
- Carpool - Is someone else going to the same location? See if you can go together!
- Let someone you trust drive your vehicle.
- Use a taxi or ride share. TIP: Use the cost/benefit worksheet to compare pricing.
- Reach out for help, ask local service clubs, churches, and volunteer groups.

Local public transportation options:

- Home & Community Support Services: 519-372-2091
- Saugeen Mobility & Regional Transit: 519-881-2501
- DriverSeat: 226-909-3111
- Taxi services vary across Grey Bruce, please call your local service to ask.

Bruce and Grey Counties continuously update transportation options.

Connect with your local county for current and full details:

Bruce County: 519-881-2400 www.brucecounty.on.ca/living/transportation

Grey County: 226-910-1001 [Grey Transit Route | Grey County](#)

Motorized and non-motorized alternatives to driving

In Ontario, a driver's licence is usually needed to drive something motorized in areas used by the general public^{13,14}.

Non-motorized things such as a bicycle or skateboard only powered by muscle power can be driven without a driver's licence in areas used by the general public, such as roads. There are safety considerations with non-motorized things such as if the user has the balance, coordination, strength and stamina to use the item. Use appropriate protective gear such as a helmet to maximize safety.

Some **bicycles with pedals and motors, commonly called "e-bikes"**, cannot be driven in areas used by the general public unless the driver has a driver's licence. Someone who does not have a driver's licence should ask the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario about the rules for using the kind of e-bike they are thinking of driving.



Motorized things can be used on **personal property** such as a backyard or field on a farm without a driver's licence. Please consider safety issues, protective gear, if the driver has the thinking ability and physical ability to safely operate the item, potential damage to property, presence of children, and any other safety concerns.

Farm tractors and farm equipment are supposed to be used only for farm work. If someone uses farm tractors and equipment as a way to travel that is not part of doing farm work, the person could have legal problems. This same risk of **legal problems** would come up if anything else is driven in areas used by the general public that is **not made for travelling**, such as lawn tractors.

Electric wheelchairs and scooters are made to help people who have trouble walking. People using wheelchairs and scooters in public must follow the same rules as people walking in public. Scooters and wheelchairs are used on sidewalks or at the side of the road if there is no sidewalk. **Electric wheelchairs and scooters should not be driven on roads like cars.** That is why a driver's licence is not needed to use an electric wheelchair or scooter. They are not made for travelling like cars. They are made to replace walking.

Electric wheelchairs and scooters are different from e-bikes. E-bikes have pedals that people can move with their legs. Electric wheelchairs and scooters do not have pedals that can be moved with legs.

More information

This page was written by Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic in July 2025 to give general legal information. Talk to a lawyer about what the law means for you and if there have been any updates to the law since this information was written. You may contact Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic if you need help to find a lawyer.

Phone: 519-370-2200, ext. 21

Email: general@gbclc.clcj.ca

Website: <https://www.gblegalclinic.com/>

My transportation plan

The following document was adapted from the Hartford, Getting There: Using Alternative Transportation worksheet¹⁵. The full link to this resource can be found in the Additional Resources section of this document.

Activity	Option	Contact	Cost	Notes
<u>Example:</u> <u>Pharmacy</u>	<u>Delivery</u>	<u>Rexall</u> <u>888-8888</u>	<u>Free</u>	<u>Wednesdays receive blister pack</u>

Expenses: cost/benefit analysis

Vehicle ownership and maintenance can be costly; sometimes the costs can outweigh the benefits of owning and operating a vehicle. Use the following breakdown to consider how much you spend on your vehicle costs per year. This tool explores the financial costs of driving. Although financial stress is one component, there are other stresses that can also be associated with driving, including mental and emotional stress¹⁶.

Having conversations about the stress associated with driving can be uncomfortable but not having conversations when driving is a concern that can have larger impacts on your health and wellness and that of others. It is okay to ask for help from family members, friends or even health care practitioners if you feel your driving wellness is at risk and to consider alternatives to driving.

COST	ACTUAL EXPENSE \$	
	EXAMPLE	MY EXPENSES
Vehicle Value/depreciation OR Payment/ Lease		
Fuel	Month: \$200	Month:
	Year: 2400 (\$200 x 12)	Year (Month x 12)
Insurance	\$ 1200/yr	
Car wash	\$240/yr	
Oil changes/Maintenance	\$ 800/yr	
Tire changes	\$ 200/yr	
Incidental repairs (tires, brakes etc)	\$ 1200/yr	
Total per year		

Conclusion




Thank you for taking the time to review this resource. We hope it has provided you with information and resources that you have found useful as you consider driving wellness as an older adult, caregiver, or practitioner.

Key things to remember:



- Your health, wellbeing, daily activities and choices directly affect your driving skills. By staying active, maintaining your health and regularly evaluating your driving abilities, you can continue to drive safely and confidently. Your wellness is key to keeping you on the road – take care of your driving wellness today.
- Driving ability is not the same as driving safety. While driving ability requires a driver to have the basic skills and fitness to operate a vehicle, driving safety is more complex. Driving safety involves a range of factors that impact your safety and the safety of others on the road.
- You don't have to deal with your driving wellness alone! Though there are many resources available, it is equally important to connect with loved ones, friends, family, as well as doctors/nurses in your life if you have concerns related to driving wellness.

Additional resources




Conversation resources

<p>Driver Planning Agreement – templated document that helps to designate a person to speak with about driving concerns should they arise. DRIVER PLANNING AGREEMENT</p>	
<p>Conversation Planner: How can I have good conversations about not driving? – developed worksheet to help others plan how to have conversations about driving concerns. Dementia & Driving Worksheet: Conversation Planner</p>	
<p>We Need to Talk: Family Conversations with Older Drivers – comprehensive document reviewing various aspects supporting family members to have conversations about driving. WeNeedtoTalk_rebrand</p>	



Exercises & strategies



<p>Getting to Your Destination: Exercises to Stay Safe on the Road – physical exercises guide for mature drivers Getting to Your Destination: Exercises to Stay Safe on the Road</p>	
<p>Returning to Driving Toolkit – St. Joseph's Healthcare London toolkit that supports practical driving exercises. Driving Assessment Programs at Parkwood institute - Patient Resources St. Joseph's Health Care London</p>	

General information




<p>Changing Gears: Making a Plan for Retiring from Driving – online course (15 minutes) to learn more about key driving topics for older adults. Changing Gears: Making a Plan for Retiring from Driving</p>	
<p>Transitioning into Safe Seniors' Driving – CAA document that provides a high-level review with tips and tricks to help promote safe driving. Transitioning into safe seniors' driving</p>	
<p>Road Safety: Senior Driving – CAA Tips and tools for Seniors staying safe on the road. Senior Driving - CAA South Central Ontario</p>	

Government & legal resources


<p>Seniors: Driving and Transportation – Government of Ontario page, supporting transportation services, vehicle permits/plates, senior specific programming/education. Seniors: driving and transportation ontario.ca</p>	
<p>Official Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Driver's Handbook - Safe and Responsible Driving The Official Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Driver's Handbook ontario.ca</p>	

<p>License Appeal Tribunal – Application and Hearing Process for appealing the MTO’s decision to suspend a license. Application and hearing process - Tribunals Ontario</p>	
<p>Medical Review for Ontario Drivers – Medical and Vision standards and test information for those with class G licenses. Medical review for Ontario drivers ontario.ca</p>	

Planning resources

<p>Driving Activities: Where, When and Why? – planning document to see where driving occurs and what changes can help reduce the need to drive. Dementia & Driving Worksheet: Driving Activities</p>	
<p>Transportation Cost Worksheet – practical template to help you view vehicle costs per year and review cost vs. benefit. Transportation Cost Worksheet</p>	
<p>Getting There: Using Alternative Transportation – practical document for planning alternatives to driving. Dementia & Driving Worksheet: Alternative Transportation</p>	

Practitioner resources

<p>Determining Medical Fitness to Operate Motor Vehicles – CMA Driver’s Guide, comprehensive guide to various reporting concerns related to medical conditions. CMA-Drivers-Guide-10th-edition-English-FINAL.pdf</p>	
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Geriatrics Pocketbook – National Geriatrics Interest Group; pages 28-30 focusing on driving. [NGIG Geriatrics Pocketbook 2025 - Version 1.docx](#)



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