

Driving when you have glaucoma

- For most people, driving represents freedom, control and independence. Driving enables most people to get to the places they want to go and to see the people they want to see when they want.
- Driving is a complex skill. Our ability to drive safely can be challenged by changes in our physical, emotional and mental condition.
- The goal of this brochure is to help you, your family and your health care professional talk about how glaucoma may affect your ability to drive safely

How can having glaucoma affect my driving?

- Glaucoma can cause partial vision loss or total blindness. Glaucoma usually affects your peripheral vision – the part of your eyesight that lets you see things “out of the corner of your eye.” Because glaucoma often affects your peripheral vision, individuals may not be aware of their vision losses until its advanced stages, when substantial changes in vision have occurred. If you have glaucoma and you drive, you may not see other cars, bicyclists, or pedestrians that are outside of your central field of view.

Can I still drive with glaucoma?

- Most likely “Yes,” if your glaucoma is found early and if you do not have significant visual field loss.

What can I do when glaucoma affects my driving?

- Doctors often can treat glaucoma and slow its progression. It is extremely important that you get your glaucoma checked on a regular basis by your eye care expert and you take any prescribed medications.
- Your eye care expert can refer you to a specialist, if needed. This specialist can give you on and off-road tests to see if, and how, your glaucoma is affecting your driving. The specialist also may offer training to improve your driving skills.
- Improving your skills could help keep you and others around you safe. To find a driver rehabilitation specialist near you, go to www.aota.org/olderdriver and look up the name of a specialist in your State. You also can call your local hospital and rehabilitation facility to find an occupational therapist who can help with the driving skills assessment and remediation. Depending on where you live, you may need to travel to nearby communities to find these services.

What if I have to cut back or give up on driving?

- You can keep your independence even if you have to cut back or give up on your driving. It may take planning ahead on your part, but it will get you to the places you want to go and the people you want to see. Consider:
 - ◆ rides with family and friends;
 - ◆ taxi cabs;
 - ◆ shuttle buses or vans; and
 - ◆ public buses, trains and subways.

- Also, senior centers, and religious and other local service groups often offer transportation services for older adults in your community.

Who can I call for help with transportation?

 Call the ElderCare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 and ask for your local Office on Aging, or go to their website at www.eldercare.gov.

- Contact your regional transit authority, which can tell you which bus or train to take.

 Call Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation In Our Nation) at 1-800-659-6428 or go to their website at www.easterseals.com/transportation.

Where do I find out more about glaucoma and its treatment?

Your first step is to talk with your eye care expert. You can also contact the:

 American Optometric Association
314-991-4100
www.aoa.org

 Glaucoma Foundation
1-800-452-8266
www.glaucoma-foundation.org

 American Academy of Ophthalmology
415-561-8500
www.aao.org

 National Eye Institute
301-496-5248
www.nei.nih.gov

 National Institutes of Health
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/glaucoma.html

- You also can get a copy of the “*Age Page On Older Drivers*” from the National Institute on Aging by calling 1-800-222-2225, or by going to their website at www.nia.nih.gov/health/engagepages/drivers.htm.

Wear your safety belt

Always wear your safety belt when you are driving or riding in a car. Make sure that every person who is riding with you also is buckled up. Wear your safety belt even if your car has air bags.

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