

Safety & the Older Driver

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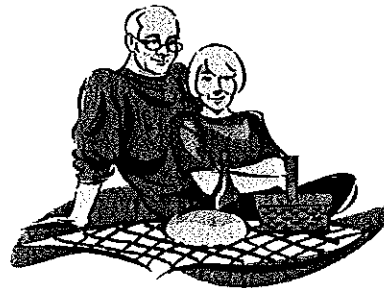
Introduction

- The number of older drivers will double by 2020.
 - Older drivers now drive more often and at older ages than previously.
- Older drivers tend to be safe
 - High seat belt use
 - Few citations for speeding, reckless driving or alcohol-related charges



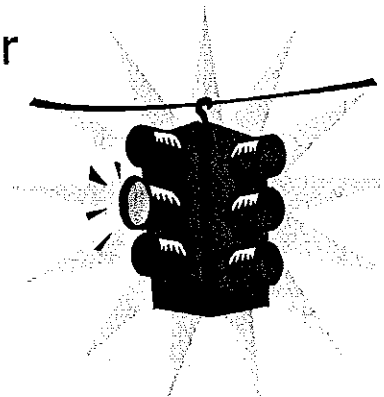
Seniors & Driving: Fact #1

- Safety for older drivers is a public health issue.



Seniors & Driving: Fact #2

- Although many older drivers self-regulate their driving behaviour, this is not enough to keep the crash rates down.



*Left hand turns most likely to
be the time when crashes occur*

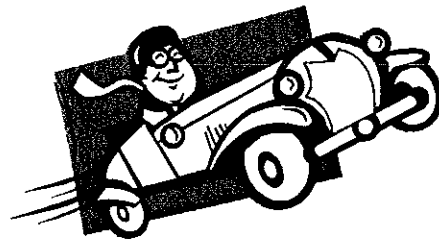
Seniors & Driving: Fact #3

- The crash rate for older drivers is related to physical and mental changes associated with aging.



Seniors & Driving: Fact #4

- The majority of older people rely on driving for transportation.





How Aging Affects Driving Safety

Aging & Driving Safety

- Reduced vision – especially at night
- Difficulty judging distance and speed
- Limited movement and range of motion
- Slower reaction time
- Difficulty focusing attention for long periods of time
- Easily distracted
- More time to understand what we see/hear
- More use of prescription &/or OTC drugs that may impair driving ability

*Seniors learning to drive later in life
(mentoring program)*

Effects of Medications &/or Alcohol



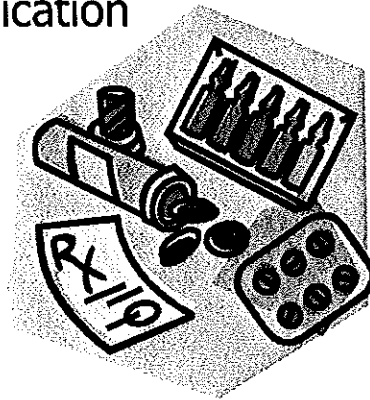
Potentially Impairing Drugs

- Seizure medication
- Antidepressants
- Nausea medication
- Allergy drugs
- Blood pressure drugs
- Parkinson's medication



Potentially Impairing Drugs

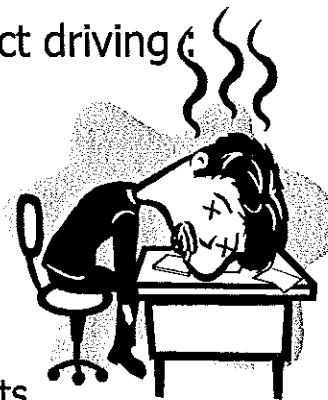
- Drugs to treat mental illness
- Anxiety and sleep medication
- Muscle relaxants
- Narcotic analgesics
- Energy and diet pills



CAA- Road Wise Driver - DVD Self assessment

Medication Side Effects

- Side effects that can affect driving:
 - Drowsiness
 - Dizziness
 - Blurred vision
 - Unsteadiness
 - Fainting
 - Slowed reaction time
 - "Parkinson-like" side effects
- These effects are often dose-dependent and decrease with time.



Alcohol, Medication & Driving

- Tolerance for alcohol decreases steadily with age
 - The body processes it less efficiently
 - There is relatively less water in your body to dilute the alcohol
- >150 medications react badly with alcohol.
- The only safe practice is to avoid alcohol completely if driving.

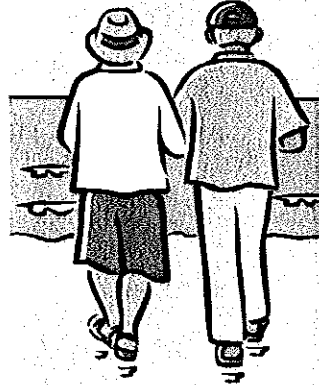
Medication & Alcohol Processing

- Many body processes change with age.
- Some organs become less efficient:
 - Liver function is reduced
 - drugs and alcohol are not cleared as quickly
 - Kidney function is also reduced
 - drugs and alcohol remain in the body longer



Other Effects of Aging

- Other changes that affect drugs and alcohol include:
 - Slowed digestion
 - Increased body fat
 - Changes in blood circulation
 - Brain sensitivity to some medications
- A healthy, active lifestyle slows these age-related effects.



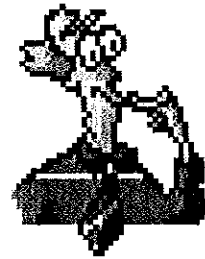
Consequences of Aging on Drug & Alcohol Effects

- Older people may be more sensitive to drugs
 - "Mood-altering" drugs (e.g., anxiety & sleep medications)
 - Alcohol
- There is increased risk if these drugs are used with alcohol.



Strategies for safe medication use...

- Take all medications according to instructions
- Ensure all doctors are aware of all drugs you are taking
- Ask about effects on driving
- Ask about effects of even a small amount of alcohol
- Never mix medications, share them or take them in combination with alcohol
- If you are at all concerned about drug effects, let someone else drive



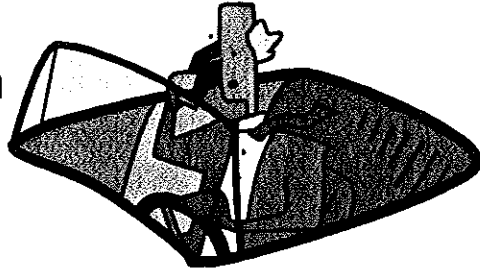
Ask if the medication will affect on

① See ② think ③ Do
version

**Problem Solving to
Maintain Driving
Wellness**

Driving Wellness

- Continued driving wellness is an ongoing process.
- Each driver is unique
 - For each challenge there is a unique solution
- Driving wellness is adaptive
- Finding the right adaptation is a team process.

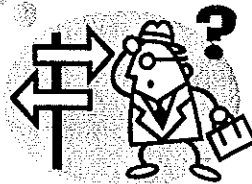


Keys to Driving Wellness

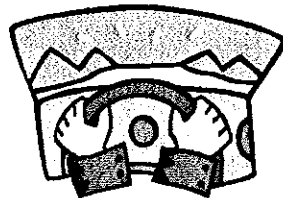
SEE

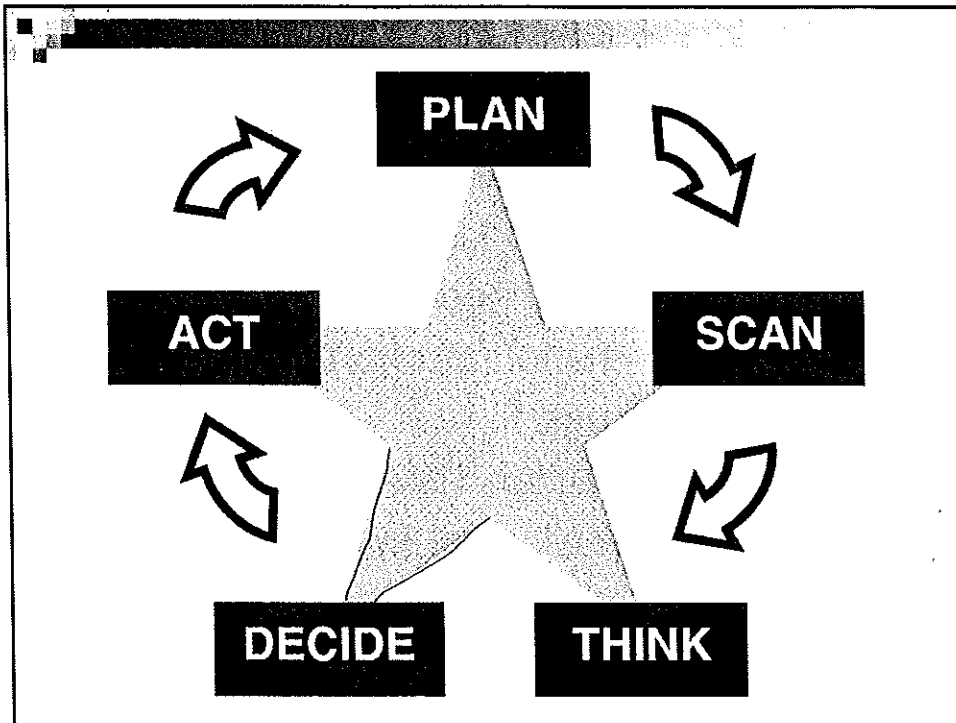


THINK



DO





Safer Driving: Reduce Your Risk

- Know the facts
 - about aging, medications & alcohol
- Review your driving
 - learn how to reduce risk
- Know your vehicle's safety features
- Brush up on your driving knowledge
- Make a plan of action
 - ▣ drive safely for as long as possible

*BC. CAA - great
web site for older
adult topics*

Safe Driving Checklist

- S** afety Record
- A** ttention Skills
- F** amily Report
- E** thanol (alcohol)
- D** rugs
- R** eaction Time
- I** ntellectual Impairment
- V** ision/Visuospatial Function
- E** xecutive Functions

Strategies for Safer Driving

- Drive only on familiar routes
- Drive slowly
- Don't drive at night
- Don't use the radio - avoid distraction
- Avoid busy intersections
- Don't drive with distracting people
- Avoid expressways
- Avoid rush hour traffic



The Decision to Stop Driving

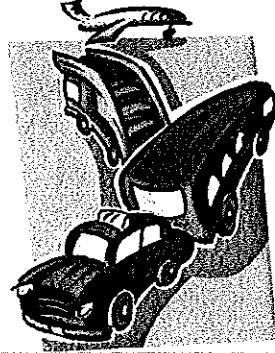


The Warning Signs

1. Increasing number of near collisions.
2. Direct involvement in minor collisions.
3. Difficulty seeing pedestrians, objects & other vehicles.
4. Difficulty co-ordinating hand and foot movements.
5. Increased nervousness when behind the wheel.

Transportation Alternatives

- Public transportation – buses
- Friends & family members who drive
- Keep your vehicle and have others drive for you (e.g., volunteer driving programs)
- Scheduled or customer call request van/bus pick-up
- Taxi voucher system
- Community access bus or van pools



Action Plan

- What are some things you could do today to improve your driving wellness?

