

RISK FACTORS:

Falls and Motor Vehicle Crashes

DID YOU KNOW that many of the factors that can make a person more likely to fall also make it more likely they'll be involved in a crash?

These factors include:

Impaired Vision

- Cataracts
- Macular Degeneration
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma
- Outdated glasses prescriptions

Medications, especially:

- Sleep aids
- Pain medications
- Anti-anxiety medications
- Combination of medications

Poor strength

Frailty

Limited range of motion (such as turning head to look behind when merging)

Impaired cognition

Previous falls or crashes

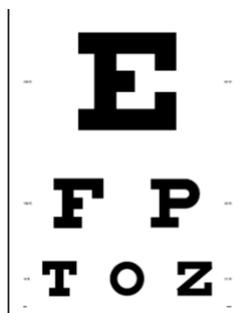
Hot weather

 (dehydration)

Alcohol and/or drugs

Chronic illness

- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Sleep disorders



Did you know...

Prior to COVID-19, unintentional injury was the 7th leading cause of death for people 65 and older in the U.S. (60,527 deaths in 2019).

Of the various types of unintentional injuries that cause death, **falls were #1** and **motor vehicle crashes were #2** (8,033 deaths).

Falls were the #1 cause of nonfatal injury for people 65 and older in the U.S. (3,143,536 injuries in 2019).

Motor vehicle crashes were the #4 cause of nonfatal injury for people 65 and older in the U.S. (205,535 injuries in 2019).

Source: (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019)
<https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/LeadingCauses.html>

IF YOU'RE CONCERNED about a loved one's risk of falling, you should also consider whether they're at risk for a crash. Ask your medical professional for advice.

SCREENING AND PREVENTION:

Falls and Motor Vehicle Crashes

HOW DO YOU KNOW if you or a loved one might be at a greater risk of a crash?

There are several tools available to you.

Vision Exam, Medication Review, and Annual Check-Ups

To decrease your risk of both falls and crashes, **don't neglect regular eye exams and physical exams.**

Be sure that your doctor or pharmacist **regularly reviews ALL the medications you're taking** (including supplements and over-the-counter medications).

For more information on how medications can affect your driving, see the FDA's information page.

[Some Medicines and Driving Don't Mix | FDA](#)

Screening Tools

Screening tools can be used by yourself, with a family member or friend, or by your family doctor or an occupational therapist. Many are free; those that are not free may be covered by insurance.

- **AARP Fitness-to-Drive** screening tool
 - <https://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/info-2013/fitness-to-drive-screening-tool.html>
- **CDC's Stay Independent** brochure (includes fall risk self-assessment)
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/pdf/STEADI-Brochure-StayIndependent-508.pdf>

On-Road Testing

If screening indicates a problem, the next step may be **on-road testing**. On-road tests may be performed by a **Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist** or by a specially trained driving instructor.

On-road tests can detect specific problems that may make someone unsafe to drive. They can also suggest ways to help someone stay safe longer (such as not driving at night, or improving skills with exercises or training). These screenings are more detailed, more expensive, and typically not covered by insurance.

Your doctor or occupational therapist can refer you for on-road testing. Learn more at:

<https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/senior-driver-safety-mobility/evaluate-your-driving-ability/>

In-Person Vehicle Check and Adjustment

CarFit lets a trained specialist work with you in your own car to check for safety issues and adjust your seats, mirrors, seat belts, and other features to make your drive safer.

Due to COVID-19, CarFit has made virtual sessions and on-demand recorded sessions available; in-person sessions are expected to return in early 2022. (<https://www.car-fit.org/>)

RESOURCES:

Falls and Motor Vehicle Crashes

WHAT NEXT? If you have concerns about driving safety or fall risk for yourself or a loved one, here are some useful resources.

Useful Professionals

Primary Care Doctor

Your doctor can advise you about medical conditions and medications that may affect your ability to drive or your risk of falling.

Occupational Therapist

OTs specialize in daily activities like cooking, shopping, and driving. They can assess your driving safety and help you move around safely in your home and or neighborhood.

Physical Therapist

PTs are exercise specialists. If weakness, stiffness, poor balance, or other problems make driving or walking, difficult, a PT can help with exercises & stretches.

Useful Resources

Area Agency on Aging

Find your local agency at [Area Agencies on Aging \(acl.gov\)](https://www.acl.gov)

The Veteran's Administration (VA) has resources on fall prevention and safer driving.

Visit https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Falls.asp

Visit https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Safe_Prevent_Motor_Vehicle_Crashes.asp

Georgia Department of Driver Services' Senior Drivers page

Visit <https://dds.georgia.gov/drivers-64-and-over>

Classes, Trainings, and Events

CarFit: Improve the fit of your own vehicle! Learn more or find a local event at www.car-fit.org

AARP's SmartDriver™ course may earn you a discount on car insurance.

Visit <https://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/>

Exercises like yoga, tai chi, dance, and water aerobics can decrease your risk of falling and also make you a stronger, more alert driver. Classes for older adults may be covered by insurance.

Download a home exercise routine from The Hartford by visiting

https://s0.hfdstatic.com/sites/the_hartford/files/exercise-for-mature-drivers.pdf

New Vehicle Technology

Learn which features are best for you and which may be annoying or confusing. See new vehicle safety technologies and what they can do to make you a safer driver at <https://mycardoeswhat.org/>

Renting or buying a new car? Take time to have the dealer or car rental agency walk you through the car's advanced safety features. Many buyers and renters don't bother, so they miss out on the benefits (and don't learn how to adjust or turn off the features that may be distracting).