

# Vision and Safety Tips For Older Drivers

## Ten tips for better vision on the road

- ❖ If you wear eyeglasses when driving, be sure to keep your prescription up-to-date and to wear the proper glasses for day and night driving (there may be a difference).
- ❖ Wear good quality sunglasses (prescription, if needed) when driving in sunlight. When possible, avoid purchasing cars with deeply-tinted windows that can hamper your vision at night or on overcast days.
- ❖ Glance frequently from the road ahead to your rear view mirror, side mirror and instrument panel when driving. Turning your head with your eyes will help you monitor activity on the sides of your car.
- ❖ Choose eyeglass or sunglass frames with narrow side (temple) pieces. Wide temple pieces may block or distract your vision.
- ❖ Adjust the driver's seat so that your vision is not obscured by the dashboard and you can see the road ahead. If the seat cannot be adjusted, use a pillow or other support for proper positioning.
- ❖ Keep mirrors, headlights, and taillights clean and in good repair. Remember to wash both the inside and outside of windshields and windows regularly.

- ❖ Avoid driving at night or in bad weather if you have difficulty seeing in low-light situations.
- ❖ Never wear sunglasses or deeply-tinted glasses for driving at night or dusk.



- ❖ Increase your concentration on the road in difficult situations by minimizing distractions. Switch off the radio, minimize discussions with passengers, avoid using cellular phones, and keep the inside temperature comfortable.
  - ❖ Avoid drinking and driving, and always use your seatbelt. Remember that certain prescription and nonprescription medications can affect your vision on the road; read labels carefully and check with your doctor.
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Nearly all adults experience some loss of visual ability with age, and many become concerned about their ability to drive confidently and safely. If you are a mature driver, you can help prepare for years of future driving by learning about the vision changes that accompany aging and adopting some simple lifestyle modifications to help compensate for these changes.

## Vision changes you may notice

Age-related vision changes may be experienced any time after 50 and continue throughout life. Some common changes include:

-  Needing more light to see well on overcast days or at night,
-  Noticing increased difficulty when changing focus from near to far objects (or vice versa),
-  Being more sensitive to glare and bright sunlight,

-  A diminishing ability to see to the side while looking ahead (peripheral vision),
-  A lessening of your ability to quickly and accurately distinguish colors, and
-  A decrease in the sharpness of your vision under certain lighting conditions.

Remember to mention any changes you've noticed when visiting your doctor of optometry for an eye examination annually (or according to the examination schedule recommended by your optometrist). You should also tell your optometrist about any prescription and nonprescription medications you are taking and about any general health problems you are experiencing (such as hypertension, diabetes or circulatory problems). Your doctor may advise you of lifestyle changes that you can adopt and, when necessary, recommend appropriate treatment options.

