

DRIVING AND PARKINSON DISEASE

The Issues:

1. PD symptoms are associated with driving ability:
 - Decline in motor skills: Slowness, stiffness, muscle tightness
 - Decline in cognitive skills: Difficulty determining distance or distinguishing shapes
2. PD medications can affect driving ability by producing side effects such as:
 - Excessive daytime sleepiness
 - Sudden-onset sleep
 - Dizziness
 - Blurred vision
 - Confusion and memory impairment

Practical Pointers:

1. Talk with your physician about the possible effects of your particular medicines.
2. Pay attention to your driving skills.
3. Report changes to your physician.
4. Be open to discussion with your family about your driving skills and, if necessary, other transportation options.
5. Remember that, as difficult as the transition may be, giving up driving does not mean giving up mobility or independence.

Resources:

1. American Medical Association (AMA) *The Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers* at www.ama-assn.org
 - Questionnaire "Am I A Safe Driver?"
 - "Tips for Safe Driving"
2. AARP and AAA Driver Safety Classes
3. Driver Safety Evaluation by a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist, for 1) Assessment of driving skills, 2) Rehabilitation, 3) Recommendations for vehicle modifications. Our physicians will provide the necessary referral.

