

## Some signs that your driving may be deteriorating:

- Increasing frequency of minor damage to the vehicle eg hitting posts, damage while parking, scraping paintwork
- Being regularly surprised by another vehicle's presence or actions
- Near misses or other vehicles swerving or braking hard to avoid you
- Getting lost or forgetting where you are going
- Family or friends expressing concern about your driving safety
- Friends or family preferring not to travel as your passenger
- Being stressed or anxious about driving

## Some medical issues that can affect your driving:

- Difficulty manoeuvring the car due to pain, stiffness or muscle weakness
- Any condition that may cause sudden incapacitation eg heart disease, seizures
- Drowsiness or reduced concentration due to illness or medications
- Reduced vision or ability to read road signs

## Useful information and contacts:

### Department of Transport and Infrastructure:

178 Stirling Terrace, Albany WA 6330

<http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/renew-my-drivers-licence-seniors-80-84.asp>

<http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/licensing/renew-my-drivers-licence-seniors-85-plus.asp>

**Independent Living Centre:** Assessments are conducted by a registered Driver Trained Occupational Therapist in a supportive environment, and aim to ensure that people are safe and able to drive, where possible. Assessments can be done in Albany or Perth by arrangement. <http://ilc.com.au/services/occupational-therapy-driver-assessment/> or ask your GP

**Taxi Users Subsidy Scheme (TUSS):** The Taxi Users' Subsidy Scheme (TUSS) provides taxi travel at a reduced rate for people who have a severe permanent disability that will always prevent them from using conventional public transport services. Information [www.transport.wa.gov.au/taxis/taxi-users-subsidy-scheme-tuss.asp](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/taxis/taxi-users-subsidy-scheme-tuss.asp) or ask your GP

**Country Age Pensioners Fuel Card:** provides eligible pensioners with up to \$575 a year towards the cost of fuel and/or taxi travel from participating providers to offer more support for the transport needs of eligible pensioners living in country areas. The Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme is funded by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program and administered by the Department of Transport. Information <http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/projects/Roads-and-Transport/Pages/Country-Age-Pension-Fuel-Card.aspx>, Australia Post Office or ask your GP

### Albany Community Care Centre (Lions) :

73 Hardie Rd, Albany 6330 WA

Telephone: 08 9841 8668

email: [reception@acc.org.au](mailto:reception@acc.org.au)

**Love's Bus Service:** 9841 1211

### Senior Citizens centre Albany:

122 Grey Street West, Albany 6330 ph: 9841 2168

# Driving for Seniors



In Western Australia, persons 80 years and older must undergo an annual medical examination in order to renew their driver's licence. With the average life expectancy now approaching 85 years and people living longer with chronic illnesses which may affect fitness to drive, the difficult question often arises at what point to stop driving. The aim of this brochure is to make that discussion a little easier for you, your family and your GP.

Driving a motor vehicle on a public road requires a good level of physical and mental wellbeing. It carries risks not only to the driver and their passengers but also to other road users. When assessing your fitness to drive, your GP must follow a set of standards as determined by AustRoads and the National Transport Commission.

It is a legal requirement for you to report any medical condition which may affect the ability to drive.

The need to drive a car to get to the shops or give your friends and family lifts to social engagements does not alter your medical fitness to drive. Unlike some other States, Western Australia does not offer "restricted" driver's licences. Your GP must assess your ability to drive as fit to drive your vehicle anywhere at any time.

We are frequently told by our patients that not driving will mean a loss of their independence,



social isolation or worse. However there are many in the community who cannot, or choose not to drive and there are alternatives available if your medical fitness to drive is brought into question. Often these are cheaper, more convenient and less stressful than continuing to drive. They may offer more opportunity to socialise and interact with your friends and fellow citizens than when you are driving. Some other things to consider are the costs of annual registration, insurance, fuel, maintenance and repair costs for your vehicle, which may add up to several thousand dollars each year.

If your doctor requires further information before signing your driver's licence medical form they may ask for a specialist opinion. Your GP may request a Practical Driving Assessment, usually done by an Occupational Therapist who is trained to conduct both physical and mental assessments to determine your ability to drive a vehicle safely. If you are 85 years or older, you must undergo a Practice Driving Assessment if you wish to hold a licence to drive something other than a car, or for hire and reward eg taxi.

Your Pioneer GP is an excellent source of information and can provide feedback on your fitness to drive. We can also assist you to find alternative means of transport if you decide to cease driving or no longer meet the fitness to drive criteria.

*In the meantime...*

### **Some simple ways of reducing your risk of accident include:**

- Self-restrict your driving to less busy periods in the daytime
- Avoid driving into the sun or in glare conditions
- Avoid driving in bad weather (not always easy in Albany!!)
- Listen to your body and don't drive when you are not feeling 100 percent
- Drive regularly to keep up your skills and road knowledge
- Plan your trip, aiming to avoid busy and complicated intersections
- Adjust your mirrors to optimise your field of view, remembering objects are closer than they look.
- If you are getting a new car, make the most of new technology such as rear-view cameras and detectors