



let's talk about

Driving After Stroke

Driving is often a major concern after a stroke. It's not unusual for stroke survivors to want to drive. Getting around after a stroke is important — but safety is even more important.



Can I drive after a stroke?

Injury to the brain may change how you do things. So before you drive again, think carefully about how these changes may affect safety for you, your family and others.

What are some warning signs of unsafe driving?

Often survivors are unaware of the difficulties in driving that they might have. Some may not realize all of the effects of their stroke. They may feel that they're able to drive even when it's a bad idea. Driving against your doctor's advice can be dangerous and may be illegal. In some cases, your doctor may have to notify your state that you've been advised not to drive.

If you or someone you know has experienced some of these warning signs of unsafe driving, please consider taking a driving test:

- Drives too fast or too slow for road conditions or posted speeds
- Needs help or instructions from passengers
- Doesn't observe signs or signals
- Makes slow or poor distance decisions
- Gets easily frustrated or confused
- Often gets lost, even in familiar areas
- Has accidents or close calls
- Drifts across lane markings into other lanes

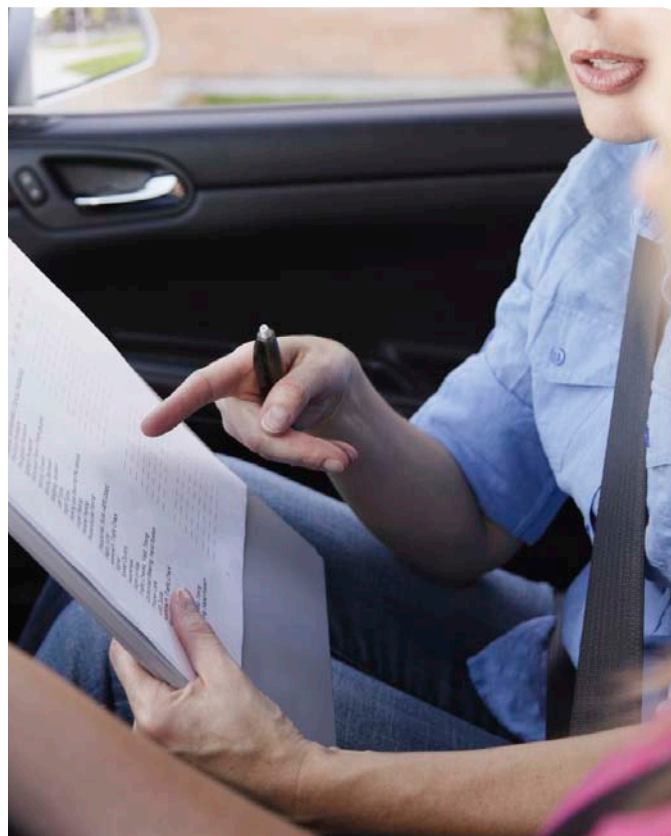
How can I tell if I can drive?

- Talk to your doctor or occupational therapist. They will offer a professional opinion about how your stroke might change your ability to drive. Contact your State Department of Motor Vehicles. Ask for the Office of Driver Safety. Ask what applies to people who've had a stroke.

(continued)



- Have your driving tested. Professionals such as driver rehabilitation specialists can evaluate your driving ability. You'll get a behind-the-wheel evaluation and be tested for vision perception, functional ability, reaction time, judgment and cognitive abilities (thinking and problem solving). Call community rehabilitation centers or your local Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Enroll in a driver's training program. For a fee, you may receive a driving assessment, classroom instruction and suggestions for modifying your vehicle (if necessary). These programs are often available through rehab centers.
- Ask your family if they have seen changes in your communication, thinking, judgment or behavior that should be evaluated before you drive again. Family often have more opportunities to observe changes than others do.



HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- 1 **Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals.** Ask about other stroke topics.
- 2 Call **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653) or visit us at **StrokeAssociation.org** to learn more about stroke.
- 3 Call the American Stroke Association's "Warmline" at **1-888-4-STROKE** (1-888-478-7653), and:
 - Sign up for *Stroke Connection*, a free magazine for stroke survivors and caregivers.
 - Talk to other stroke survivors and caregivers and find local support groups.

Do you have questions for the doctor or nurse?

Take a few minutes to write your questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider.

For example:

When should I test my driving ability?

Is my driving restriction permanent?

If not, when might I be able to drive again?

My Questions:

We have many other fact sheets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one. Visit **strokeassociation.org/letstalkaboutstroke** to learn more.

Knowledge is power, so Learn and Live!