

Tips for Dementia & Driving: What to Do When Your Loved One Should Hang up the Keys

Driving requires good judgement, quick decision-making and fast reaction time. Unfortunately, dementia gradually diminishes these abilities, making it hard or impossible for individuals with the disease to accomplish complex tasks. If you're concerned about your loved one's ability to drive, helping them transition from the driver's seat is the best thing you can do to ensure their safety.

Signs of Unsafe Driving

Pay close attention to your loved one's actions and behavior, both inside and outside a vehicle, to help you determine if they're no longer safe behind the wheel. Some warning signs include:

- Trouble locating familiar places
- Ignoring traffic signals and/or making poor decisions in traffic
- Becoming angry or confused behind the wheel
- Dangerous driving (hitting objects, crossing lines, etc.)
- Poor coordination and difficulty judging distance
- Becoming less alert to what's going on around them
- Becoming disoriented in familiar places
- Having trouble making decisions

Talking to Your Loved One About Hanging up the Keys

When you notice these or other problems in your loved one's driving or behavior, it's probably time to have a conversation about their safety. In the best cases, your loved one will have already acknowledged the fact that they'll need to stop driving. In the worst, the conversation will be met with angry and resistance. Consider the following advice to help your loved one stop driving when it becomes unsafe:

- Have your loved one sign a driving contract when they're still in the early stages of dementia.
- Continuously include your loved one in conversations about their driving ability and safety.
- Ask your loved one's physician to write a letter stating their professional opinion on your loved one's ability (or lack thereof) to drive safely.
- Have your loved one complete a driving evaluation at a rehab center or DMV.
- If they won't stop driving, take away their car keys, disable their car or get rid of the car entirely.
- Offer solutions to help them maintain their independence even after they stop driving:
 - Have friends or family drive them to the store or doctor's appointments
 - Use public transportation or a taxi service

- Locate an eldercare organization that helps with transportation
- Arrange for prescriptions and groceries to be delivered to their home
- Ask their hair dresser or barber to make regular home visits
- Visit your loved one often and plan family get-togethers at their home, so they continue to be socially involved

The Art of Living

At Tuscan Gardens[®] of Venetia Bay, we've mastered the art of living. We've perfected the balance of personalized support and an uplifting lifestyle, helping our residents experience independence, joy and meaning every day.

Offering [supportive independent living, assisted living and memory care](#) services for families in Venice, Florida, Tuscan Gardens of Venetia Bay was founded with one simple, yet profound goal – to create a community worthy of our parents. In all we do, we are guided by the principles of family, [culture and engagement](#), working to represent the remarkable way of life our families deserve.

The essence of our community is made up not only of mere aesthetics, but an artfully designed lifestyle to bring out the best of what each day has to offer. From dedicated care that respects residents' individuality and dignity to a [lifestyle that nurtures their love of life](#), Tuscan Gardens was built to be more than just a residence, but a place to call home.

To learn more about our comfortable, elegant community, [contact us today!](#)