

At highway speeds, your vehicle advances at a rate of 15 metres, or 50 feet, in the blink of an eye.

To learn more...

Helpful guide...

- Use this guide to think about your own health and its impact on your driving.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist whether your condition or medication alters your driving abilities.
- Share the information with a friend or family member who needs to assess their capacity to drive.

About how your condition/ medication impacts driving:

- Speak to your doctor

About driver re-testing:

- Contact your provincial Ministry of Transportation or a local driving school

About the DriveABLE assessment for medically-at-risk drivers:

- Call (780) 433-1494 or go to www.driveABLE.com

or call

Vancouver	(604) 921-3355
Calgary	(403) 252-2243
Lethbridge	(403) 317-1463
Medicine Hat	(403) 528-4860
Red Deer	(403) 309-6180
Montreal	(514) 733-1414
Toronto	(416) 498-6429
Halifax	(902) 423-2605

About 55-Alive refresher courses:

- Call the Canada Safety Council (613) 739-1535 or go to www.safety-council.org
- or
- Call your provincial Safety Council www.safety-council.org/csc.psc.htm

Your Health & Responsibility

Safe Driving

Your Safety

Driving is a serious responsibility. Your safety, the safety of your passengers, of other motorists and of pedestrians is in your hands when you're behind the wheel.

At any age, medical conditions or drug interactions can cause pronounced changes in physical and mental abilities that could impact your safe driving skills. Being well rested, attentive and as healthy as possible is critical to ensure your best possible driving performance.

Forgetful?

Limited vision or hearing?

Taking medication?

Stiff neck or joints?

Feeling faint or dizzy?

Even the best drivers can become unsafe when medical conditions change their abilities.

Your health and safe driving

Unexplained fainting spells must be immediately reported to your doctor. Imagine what could happen if you fainted while driving! And, anyone who has had one or more **serious** falls in the past two years should consider greatly reducing or stopping driving entirely.

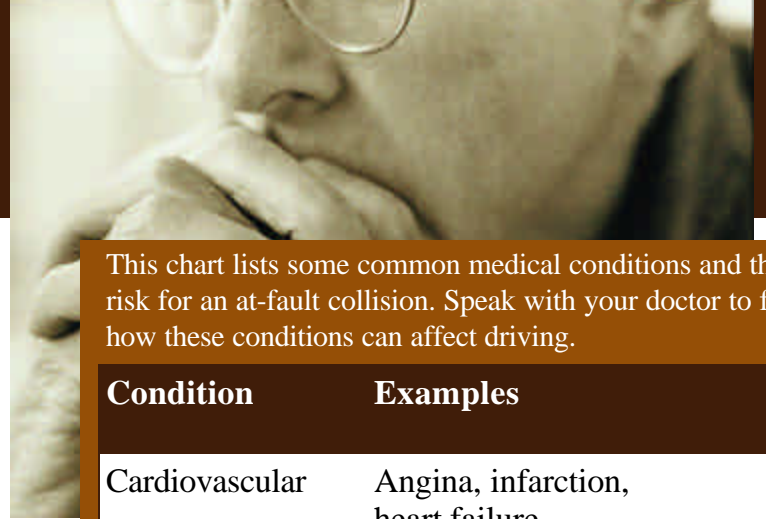
A near collision can also indicate a problem. If others criticize your driving, ask for specifics. For instance, are you driving too slowly? Sometimes, there's a logical explanation for poor driving – such as a need for eyeglasses.

Unfortunately, medical conditions can reduce peoples' awareness of how dangerous their driving has become. When a person seems unaware of their driving errors, family members or the doctor must intervene.

If necessary, restrict your driving. For example, drive only during daylight hours, avoid rush hour and busy intersections, and stick to familiar roads. If this is still not safe, you may need to stop driving at least until your health improves.

If you must stop driving, find out about local bus services and hospital shuttles. If your community does not have taxis or buses, speak with your family, your church, community group, or volunteer centre to find other ways to get around.

Health conditions are extremely personal. But road safety concerns everyone – motorists, families, physicians, governments, and others.



This chart lists some common medical conditions and the potential increased risk for an at-fault collision. Speak with your doctor to find out more about how these conditions can affect driving.

Condition	Examples	% increased risk of at-fault crash
Cardiovascular	Angina, infarction, heart failure, arrhythmia, stroke	180%
Pulmonary	Asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema	210%
Metabolic	Diabetes	220%
Psychiatric	Psychoneurosis, psychosis, depression, schizophrenia, dementia	250%
Visual acuity	Glaucoma, cataracts, diminishing field of vision, double vision	280%
Epilepsy		300%
Musculoskeletal	Arthritis	450%
Neurologic	Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, head injury, tumour, narcolepsy, sleep apnea, repeated fainting spells or unexplained falls	510%
Cognitive**	Alzheimer's	760%

** Of all the medical conditions that affect driving ability, progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain, such as Alzheimer's disease, have the most profound effect on driving skills. Many other medical conditions can affect mental/cognitive abilities (e.g., heart, lung, or kidney disease, head injury, depression). However, just having the medical condition is not enough to say whether or not it is safe to drive. A driving evaluation designed for people with medical conditions is necessary.

Drivers with cognitive deficits are 760% more likely than healthy drivers to be in an at-fault collision.

Drugs

Prescription and over-the-counter drugs have side-effects. Medication can cause changes in your ability to think and respond quickly, and disturb your vision. Review your medications with your doctor and/or pharmacist and ask if it's safe to drive. This is especially important if you are taking multiple medications.

Vision

The risk of a crash at night is about 30 per cent higher for all motorists. Glaucoma, cataracts, and deteriorating depth perception are all potential challenges for both day-time and night-time driving and can make it unsafe for you to drive. Difficulty with glare is a special problem for night-time driving. If night driving is a problem for you, consider limiting your driving to daylight hours.

Hearing

Good hearing is vital to hear oncoming traffic, horns and emergency vehicles. If you have limited hearing, turn off the radio and limit distracting conversations.

Flexibility and reflexes

Sharp turns, shoulder checks, and merging with heavy traffic are standard driving tasks. Chronic arthritis or rheumatism can make these manoeuvres more difficult. Multiple mirrors do not eliminate blind spots, only relocate them. Mirrors cannot replace a look over the shoulder prior to a lane change. Exercise to stay flexible and speak to your doctor or physiotherapist about stretches that may help.

Severe pain

Severe pain can decrease concentration or limit freedom of movement to a degree that can make driving extremely hazardous. Prescription and over-the-counter painkillers may also interfere with your driving abilities. Avoid driving if you are experiencing frequent, chronic, or incapacitating pain.