

Warning Signs for Drivers with Dementia

A diagnosis of mild dementia alone is not an automatic reason to stop driving. Families can use these warning signs as an objective way to monitor any changes in driving skills over time. The signs are ranked from minor to serious. Written notes of observations can help you make informed decisions and may be useful in conversations with healthcare providers.

Consider the frequency and severity of incidents. Several minor incidents or an unusual, major incident may warrant action. Look for patterns of change over time. Isolated or minor incidents may not warrant drastic action. Avoid an alarming reaction. Take notes and have conversations at a later time, instead of during or right after an incident.

Driving Behavior Warning Signs - When Noticed, How Often

1. Decrease in confidence while driving	16. Uses a “copilot”
2. Difficulty turning to see when backing up	17. Bad judgment on making left hand turns
3. Riding the brake	18. Near misses
4. Easily distracted while driving	19. Delayed response to unexpected situations
5. Other drivers often honk horns	20. Moving into wrong lane
6. Incorrect signaling	21. Difficulty maintaining lane position
7. Difficulty parking within a defined space	22. Confusion at exits
8. Hitting curbs	23. Ticketed moving violations or warnings
9. Scrapes or dents on the car, mailbox or garage	24. Getting lost in familiar places
10. Increased agitation or irritation when driving	25. Car accident
11. Failure to notice important activity on the side of the road	26. Failure to stop at stop sign or red light
12. Failure to notice traffic signs	27. Confusing the gas and brake pedals*
13. Trouble navigating turns	28. Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason*
14. Driving at inappropriate speeds	29. Other signs:
15. Not anticipating potential dangerous situations	

* Stop driving immediately