

Driving Issues

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The thought of not being able to drive can be an extremely emotional decision for HD families. It often means loss of independence or freedom to the person with HD which can trigger feelings of depression, isolation and anger. It will likely cause disruption to the family routine as well as emotional stress to both the person with HD and family members. Just having HD does not mean someone is unsafe to drive. The deterioration in concentration, processing information, decision-making, and slower muscle response, eventually will impact the HD person's ability to drive safely. Knowing what to expect and preparing can attempt to make the process as seamless as possible for the HD person and the family.



Start talking about DRIVING early BEFORE there are issues!

How to approach the conversation?

- Remember giving up car keys is best done over a gradual process
- Avoid alienating or calling the person a bad or dangerous driver as they can become defensive.
- Be respectful in remembering driving often means independence and the thought of not driving can trigger some people they are losing a piece of their freedom.

What to Discuss?

Have a plan:

- How will family let the driver know they have concerns?
- Who in the family is best to discuss the issues and safety concerns?
- What community resources and/or medical professionals can assist with safety conversations
- How and who will help the person with transportation once they stop driving



Evaluating Driving Skills

Periodically evaluating the HD persons driving skills may be helpful in identifying issues early and implementing driver safety strategies and/or stopping driving before any incidents/accidents occur.

- Traffic tickets, traffic stops/warnings or had any accidents, near accidents, fender benders, in the last 2 years
- Other drivers honk or pass frequently
- Forget to buckle up, turn on headlights, adjust mirrors, etc.
- Reaction to sudden changes in traffic patterns, sirens/flashing lights
- Trouble seeing other vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians
- Difficulties merging on/off freeways
- Troubles working the pedals or moving from accelerator to brake
- Use of mirrors and turning their head to check blind spots
- Miss/ignore stop signs or traffic lights
- Change, weave or drift into other lanes without signaling



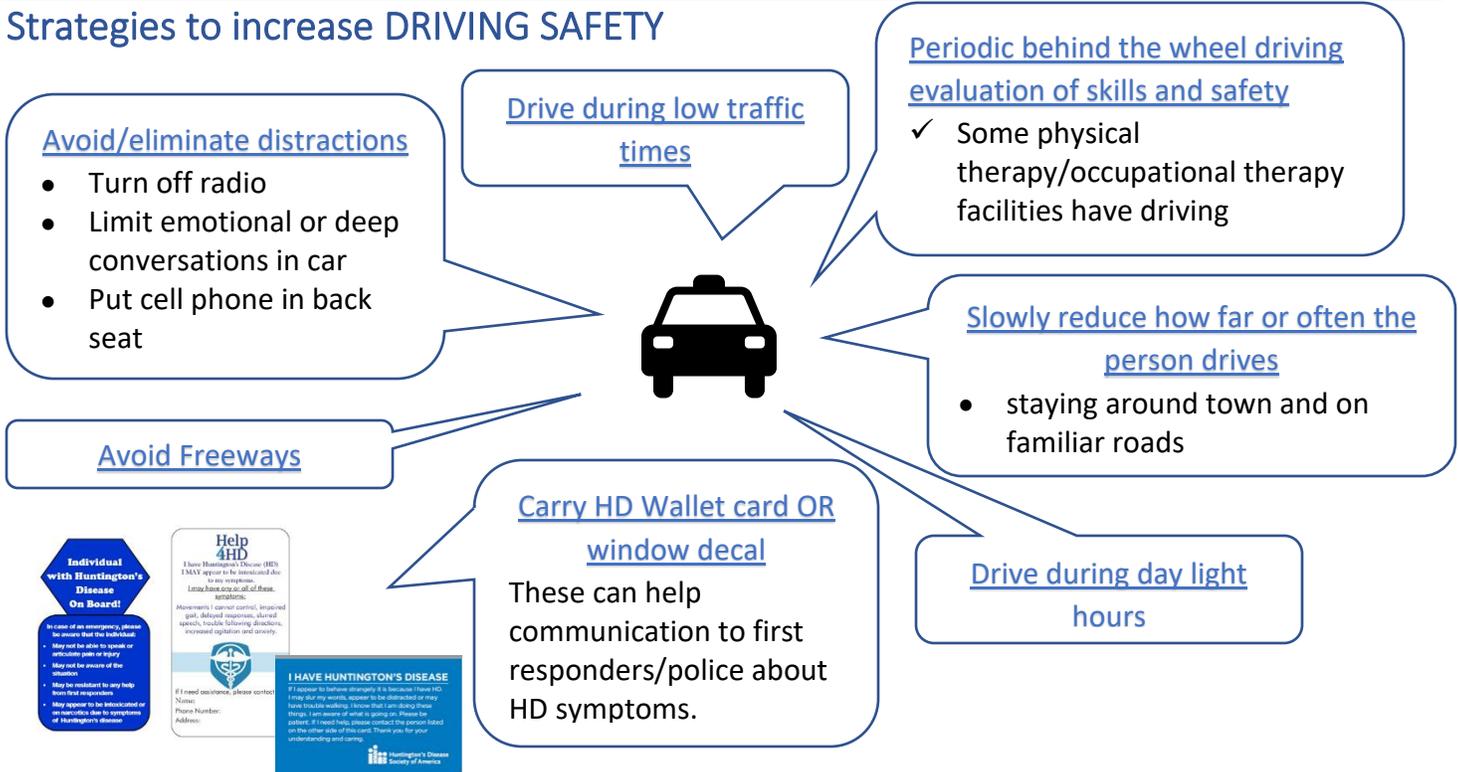
Fitness to Drive tool:

<http://fitnesstodrive.php.ufl.edu/us/>

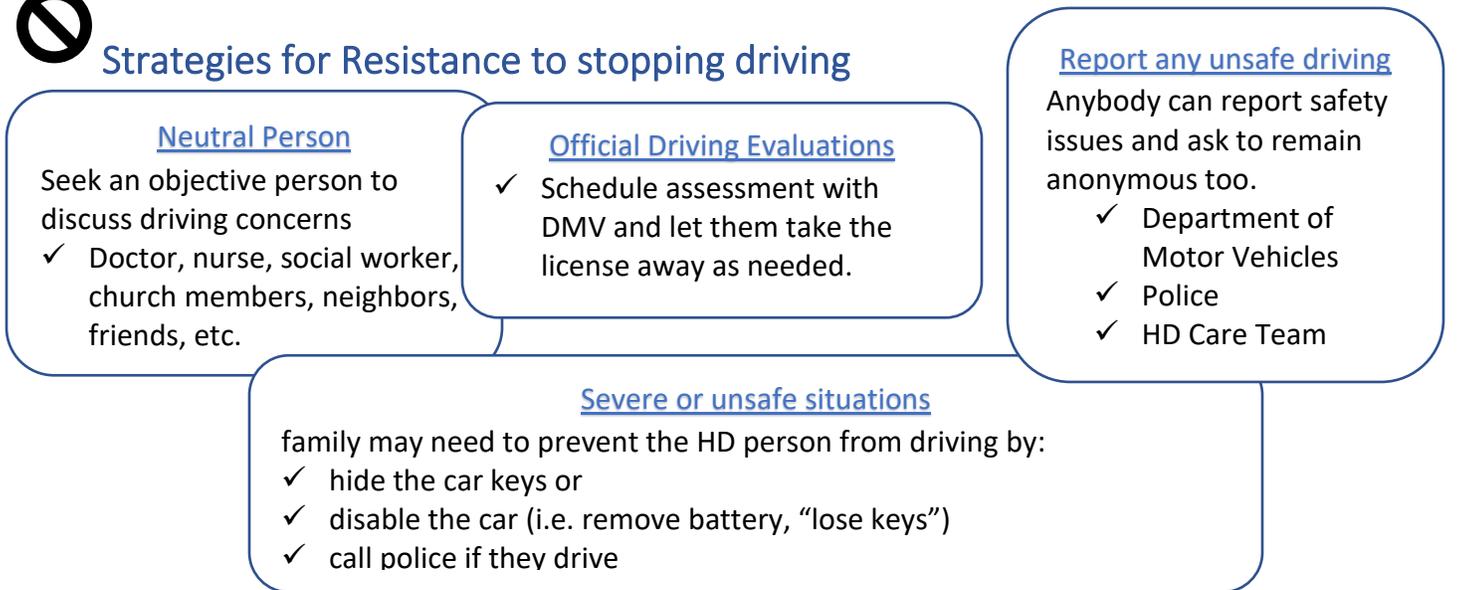
Developed by the University of Florida as a tool to be used by family members/care partners to assess driving safety for their loved one.

- Caregiver completes
- Will ask for demographic information
- Watch videos demonstrating safe driving techniques.
- After videos, answer 54 multiple-choice questions about the driving ability of the person being assessed. After completion, the program provides a scorecard about the person's driving skills with recommendations.
- Takes about 20—30 minutes to complete.

Strategies to increase DRIVING SAFETY



Strategies for Resistance to stopping driving



More Resources

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety California Department of Motor Vehicles