

What if I am still worried about my memory?

If you or members of your family still have concerns about your memory, you should contact your family doctor as soon as possible.

Driving and Memory Problems

Your feedback

If you would like to know more about us, need information in a different language or format or have a concern, compliment or complaint, then please contact our PALS Team:

PALS Team
Devon Partnership NHS Trust
Wonford House, Dryden Road
Exeter EX2 5AF

Freephone: 0800 0730741
Email: dpn-tr.pals@nhs.net

You will also find useful information about our services and issues related to mental health and wellbeing on our website.

www.dpt.nhs.uk



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As people get older, they often become concerned about their driving skills. Their family members and friends can also become worried about their ability to drive safely. For people with memory problems, the level of concern can be more serious. This is entirely understandable.

The prospect of no longer being able to drive safely can be a very difficult one to come to terms with. This leaflet may help you, or your family members, to decide if you should still be driving and what you should do if you have been diagnosed with memory problems.

Does having memory problems mean I can't drive?

Not necessarily. However, for your own safety and for the safety of other road users it is important to ensure that you are still safe to drive. There are certain legal requirements that have to be met.

I have been driving for years and have never had an accident – surely I am still safe?

Whilst Driving may seem 'second nature' to experienced drivers, it is actually a highly complex task. Not only do you need to remember the route, you also need to 'read the road' and anticipate the actions of other drivers. You may need to react very quickly to someone else's bad driving. These abilities can become impaired in people with memory problems.

What do I have to do if I have been diagnosed with memory problems but I want to continue to drive?

By law, you have to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) at:

Driver Medical Unit
DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU
Telephone: **0300 790 6806**

They will then contact you asking for permission to approach your doctor for a medical report. Once the DVLA receive this report they will make a decision about your licence, or ask for a further assessment of your driving. It is important to remember that informing the DVLA does not mean that you will inevitably lose your licence, and that it is a legal requirement.

You may also need to inform your insurance company – the majority of insurers have a clause in the contract that requires you to inform them if there is a change in your medical health. If you fail to inform your insurer, they may refuse to cover you in the event of an accident.

I only pop down to the shops once per week – do I still have to inform DVLA?

Yes. In the eyes of the law you are either fit to drive or not. It doesn't matter whether you drive long distances regularly, or only short distances occasionally.

Will the memory service decide if I can't drive?

The people providing memory services are not driving assessors and will not decide whether or not you can drive. This decision rests with the DVLA. If staff are very concerned for your safety, they may strongly advise you to stop driving until a decision is reached by the DVLA.

What if I am thinking of giving up driving anyway?

Many people do decide to stop driving. Sometimes it becomes increasingly stressful and many people feel better after making a decision to stop.

The advantages in continuing to drive include:

- Continued independence and not relying on others
- Public transport is not always available (especially in rural areas).

The advantages in giving up driving include:

- Not having to pay for road tax, insurance, fuel and car maintenance
- Not having to struggle to park
- No longer worrying about your ability to drive safely.

Most people are very sensible about recognising whether or not they should continue to drive and the vast majority make the right decision.