

Will Power

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE PIONEERS ASSISTANCE FUND

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TO KEEP DRIVING OR NOT

Q: Is there a law about being too old to drive?

A: The ability to drive is related to health rather than years. A very fit 80 year-old who is mentally sharp may be able to renew her license with ease, whereas a 65 year-old with moderate visual problems cannot. Should a 78 year-old man who cannot turn his neck be permitted to drive? Or a physically healthy 95 year-old with memory problems?

The range of physical and cognitive impairments that can interfere with driving include vision, hearing, mental ability, (judgement, attention, memory), hand strength, foot and ankle agility, and a host of other tiny neurological and physical maneuvers that most younger drivers do without thinking. One of the newer developments in senior safety involves checking to make sure your car still fits you, in terms of both comfort and safety.

One of the reasons many older drivers refuse to quit is that they fear they will lose independence. Before you stop driving, or suggest a loved one do so, look into community transportation options in your area. There might be low-cost taxi vouchers for seniors, free bus passes, volunteers or senior shuttles. Another reason is they don't know how to check for changes that impact their driving.

A few resources to check your driver safety:

- **car-fit.org** offers 12-point checklist to make sure your car is still a good physical match for your aging body.

- **AARP** offers several programs at www.aarpdriversafety.org.

- **CHECK YOUR STATE LAWS:**
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderDriversBook/pages/Chapter8.html>

In addition to checking your own safety, most states will allow anyone to report an unsafe driver (check your local DMV for the form or process). If you suspect a friend, parent, spouse or neighbor should be tested for driver safety, you owe it to the community to report it. Most reporting is anonymous, although some states require doctors to report concerns. Wouldn't you rather monitor yourself than wait for someone else to report you?

Call us for a free brochure on older drivers- 888-994-3863, ext. 2390.

Sources:

"CareFit for Seniors" Westways, November/December 2015, page 11.

"Too Old To Drive? Depends On Which State You Live In," available at:
<http://blog.aarp.org/2012/09/17/too-old-to-drive-depends-on-which-state-you-live-in/>

"Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers," a physician's guide found at:
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/olddrive/OlderDriversBook/pages/Chapter8.html>

JOKE OF THE MONTH

A Buddhist monk walks up to a hot dog vendor in New York and says "Make me one with everything."

WILL CALL

Do you or someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or wrpioneers.org





SUGAR & SPICE

New dietary guidelines from the U.S.D.A. were announced this year, and they place a lot of emphasis on cutting down on sugar. If you are someone who sweetens their coffee, or has dessert after every meal, this may sound scary, even impossible.

Let's start with this: Your body needs sugar in the blood (glucose) to live. But processed, refined sugars, are sugars that you can live without. Sugars such as lactose (milk sugar), fructose (fruit sugar), sucrose (beets and sugar cane) occur naturally in foods. Your body craves these foods when it needs sugar. Your body knows what it needs, and it's probably getting too much.

Artificial sweeteners and sugar substitutes may not be the answer. If you are craving something sweet, have a little sweet made with real sugar, or even better, eat a piece of fresh or dried fruit. Frozen fruit may be better than canned, as the latter is packed in a syrup. If you choose canned fruit, look for light syrup or "no added sugar." Read labels!

Sometimes adding a spice can help lower the amount of sugar you use in recipes. A dash of cinnamon, a citrus rind, or a splash of juice might be just the thing to sweeten your tea, enhance that muffin recipe or satisfy a craving.

Be realistic. Giving up sweets totally is impossible. Set small goals and listen to

your body. The smart course of action is to know which sweets you want keep in your diet and keep them handy. When you don't have what you want, you grab whatever is handy, leading to poor choices, feeling guilty, and often overeating.

Through the practice of mindful eating, you can coach yourself through a diet change that reduces the amount of sugar you eat. Listen to your body, experiment with eating less sugar, and acknowledge the positive change. Appreciate your good choices, and feel good about your healthy eating habits. The positive reinforcement can keep you on track.

Call our social workers anytime for motivating tips on making changes to your eating to be a little better today! 888-994-3863, ext. 2390.

For tips and other activities, go to:
www.choosemyplate.gov.

Resources:

"7 Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude" by Amy Morin in Psychology Today, available at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude>.

"Dietary Details To Chew On," Los Angeles Times 1/16/16, p. F6

“ QUOTE OF THE MONTH

When you are satisfied you are successful. For that's all there is to success is satisfaction. - Will Rogers

