

Driving with a Chronic Health Condition

Staying safe behind the wheel

It takes more than just time behind the wheel to be a safe driver. You need to be focused and alert at all times to avoid an accident. Most people with chronic conditions are able to drive without any problems at all as long as they keep their symptoms under control. However, some people with chronic (long-term) health conditions have a higher risk of having an accident while driving.

Some chronic conditions that are known to cause problems while driving include:

- Epilepsy or seizures
- Mental illness
- Memory and learning disorders
- Diabetes
- Sleep disorders
- Heart or lung problems
- Vision problems
- Muscle, joint, or neurologic disease

Starting a new medicine, taking too much medicine, or having a reaction to a medicine can also cause problems when driving.

Check before you drive

To stay safe when driving, follow these basic rules:

- Don't drive if you are having symptoms.** Even mild symptoms can make it hard to react quickly in a dangerous situation. Severe symptoms might make you pass out. If this happens when you are driving, you, your passengers, or anyone else on the road could be injured or killed.
- Work with your healthcare provider to keep your symptoms under control.** Following your treatment plan will help you lower your risk of having an accident as well as improve your overall health.
- Only take your medicines as prescribed.** Some medicines can make you drowsy or woozy. Others may cause a reaction when you first start taking them or when mixed with other medicines. **If your medicine makes you feel funny or you think you are having a reaction, don't drive!**
- Wear a medical ID that is easily seen.** If you are in a crash, your wallet or smartphone might get tossed, broken, or lost. Having a medical ID could save your life.
- Always wear a seat belt,** and make sure your passengers buckle up, too.



When should I call my doctor?

Call 911 if you feel you are experiencing a medical emergency.

If you don't think it's safe for you to drive and you have an **urgent health issue**, either:

- Call your healthcare provider
- Go to [intermountainconnectcare.org](https://www.intermountainconnectcare.org) on your computer, smartphone, or tablet for a video visit with an Intermountain provider about your urgent care needs. (Each visit costs \$49.)

Know the law

In Utah, when you renew your current driver's license or apply for a new one, you will be asked about any chronic conditions. If you check the "yes" box, you will get a form in the mail that you need to take to your doctor to be filled out (see the image at right).

This form helps the state Driver License Division decide if your health condition is well-controlled. If not, you might have your driver's license suspended for a time.

If you live outside of Utah, you can learn what the rules are in your state by going to this website: diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/know-your-rights/discrimination/drivers-licenses/drivers-license-laws-bystate.html.

If you lose your license to drive

If you have to stop driving for a short time or retire from driving, you can still keep your independence. There are many ways to get to the places you want to be including:

- Riding with family and friends
- Taking a taxi
- Using a driving service like Uber or Lyft
- Taking a bus or train
- Using a shuttle bus or van

Some senior centers, religious organizations, and local support groups also offer driving services. **Call 211 to find out about driving services in your area.**

If you are missing an arm or leg or have another disability, you may need to see a driving specialist before you can get your license back.

FUNCTIONAL ABILITY EVALUATION MEDICAL REPORT
TOP PORTION MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY APPLICANT

UTAH DRIVER LICENSE DIVISION
 110 BOX 148461
 SLC UT 84144-0001
 Phone Number: (801) 957-4600
 Fax Number: (801) 957-8099

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle or Maiden Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Driver License or DPL#: _____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ **Date:** _____

BOTTOM PORTION TO BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

The following safety assessment level is for use in determining driving privileges. It is consistent with the current edition of Functional Ability in Driving: Guidelines and Standards for Health Care Professionals. Please indicate level below with a check mark and your initials.

Subtle Assessment Level	A Diabetes or Medication Caution On Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	B Vision of Vehicles or Road Power	C Memory <input type="checkbox"/> Inhibitor Use <input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen wearing	D Seizure	E Absence of Eating Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol use <input type="checkbox"/> Medication	F Learning History	G Pregnancy or Medical Condition	H Alcohol or Other Drugs	I Mental Health Issues (Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, Schizophrenia, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Balance
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7				N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A	N/A
8				N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A

Please indicate if any of the following apply to this medical review:
 Non-standard review time frame.
 Safety Assessment categories not marked.
 I recommend the driver's license be suspended.
 There are special circumstances.
 There are special circumstances.
 There are special circumstances.

Recommended Restrictions: _____

Health Care Professional Signature: _____ Date: _____

Utah Driver License Division Form DL-01 (Rev. 11/15)

The Functional Ability Evaluation Form and Certificate of Vision will help the Utah Driver License Division decide if you can drive safely. Utah law says that drivers should stop driving and tell the Driver License Division if they have or develop a physical, mental, or emotional problem that could affect their driving.

Assessing your driving skills

Certain Intermountain hospitals and rehabilitation centers have occupational therapists who can help with your driving skills assessment. These driving assessment specialists will:

- Check your medical and driving history
- Test your driving skills
- Evaluate your ability to move, think, and see
- Give you an assessment of your skills
- Help you create an alternative transportation plan if you need one

The Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialists can also help find a certified driving specialist near you. They can be reached at 1-800-290-2344. Or, visit their website at aded.net.

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