Tips for Safe Travel on the Road

- Adjust the driver's seat so that your chest is 10 inches or more from the steering wheel.
- Adjust your sitting posture by moving the steering wheel, adjusting your seat or sitting on a cushion to get your eyes at least three inches higher than the top of the steering wheel.
- Always adjust your side-view mirrors to minimize the "blind spot" in the rear of the vehicle.
- If left turns are a problem, try planning a route with more right turns and minimize or eliminate left turns.
- If busy road traffic presents a problem, try planning an outing during quieter times such as the middle of the day on a weekday.
- When you start taking a new medicine, ask your physician or pharmacist about side effects. Many medications may affect your driving even when you feel fine. If your medication makes you dizzy or drowsy, talk to your physician to find out ways to take your medicine so it doesn't affect your driving.

Drive Safe Program
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Newton-Wellesley Hospital

2014 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02462

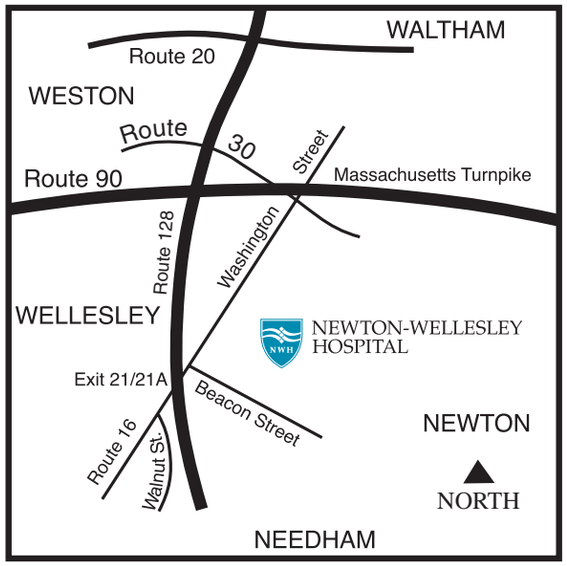
617-243-6172

Fax 617-243-6651

Email *drivesafe@partners.org*

NEWTON-WELLESLEY HOSPITAL

Newton-Wellesley Hospital
2014 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02462
617-243-6000 • www.nwh.org



From West of Route 128 (I-95)

Take the Mass Pike to Route 128 (I-95). Proceed South on 128 (I-95) for less than one mile. Take exit 21/21A to Route 16 East. Proceed on Route 16 East 1/4 mile to the Hospital's East Entrance. Valet parking is available weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm.

From Boston

Take the Mass Pike to Exit 16 (West Newton). Follow Route 16 West for 1-1/4 miles to the Hospital's East Entrance. Valet parking is available weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm.

From North or South Route 128 (I-95)

Take Exit 21/21A to Route 16 East. Proceed on Route 16 East 1/4 mile to the Hospital's East Entrance. Valet parking is available weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm.

MBTA

Take Green Riverside line (D-train) outbound, to the Woodland stop. Walk out to Washington Street and turn left. Newton-Wellesley Hospital is two blocks on the left.

The Drive Safe Program is located on the second floor of the Main Hospital Building in the Rehabilitation Services Department at Newton-Wellesley Hospital.

06.09/3K

Drive Safe Program
at Newton-Wellesley Hospital

NEWTON-WELLESLEY HOSPITAL

PARTNERS HEALTHCARE | FOUNDED BY BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL AND MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Drive Safe Program

at Newton-Wellesley Hospital

For many older adults, driving is a symbol of freedom and independence and represents the ability to maintain connections and actively participate in the community. However, driving abilities can change over time due to declining vision, decreased strength, stiff joints, slowed reaction times, medical conditions or medication usage. Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among 65 to 74 year olds and are the second leading cause, after falls, among 75 to 84 year olds.

Many people are hesitant to raise concerns about their own or their loved one's driving because they fear a loss of independence. The Drive Safe Program at Newton-Wellesley Hospital can help you determine if you or your loved one are safe to continue or resume driving. Functional changes related to aging do not affect all drivers at the same rate or in the same way. The visual, cognitive and physical problems that some individuals experience can affect driving at any age. Ability, not age, should be the deciding factor when determining whether an older adult should continue to drive.

What is the Drive Safe Program?

The Drive Safe Program serves adult drivers who are experiencing changes due to medical conditions, trauma, surgery, neurological incidents or aging. During an evaluation in the clinic, an occupational therapist tests the physical, cognitive and visual skills that are needed for driving. Rules of the road and driving safety knowledge are also reviewed.

If the client demonstrates the underlying skills for driving, the occupational therapist coordinates an on-road assessment with a licensed driving instructor in a specially equipped vehicle. This assessment evaluates the client's performance in real traffic situations. The results of the on-road assessment are combined with the clinical assessment to determine fitness to drive.

If the occupational therapist thinks that driving safety could be improved, options will be discussed with the client and family. Recommendations may include continued occupational therapy or physical therapy, consultations with vision or medical specialists, training with assistive driving devices or enrolling in a mature driving program.

When the driving evaluation indicates that the client should not continue driving, the occupational therapist discusses alternative transportation options that enable independence and participation in valued daily activities.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Drive Safe Program

How do I pay for my Drive Safe evaluation?

Drive Safe is a fee-for-service program. Questions about costs can be answered by calling the Department of Rehabilitation Services at 617-243-6172. Most insurance companies do not pay for driving evaluations or training. Clients are encouraged to check their insurance plans for coverage and reimbursement guidelines.

How are referrals made?

- A physician's prescription for a "Driving Evaluation" is required and should include the client's diagnosis or the reason why he/she is being referred. The prescription may be faxed to 617-243-6651 or brought to the first appointment.

Image used with permission from AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

- Clients, family members or physicians can schedule an appointment by calling the Department of Rehabilitation Services at 617-243-6172.

What happens on the day of my driving evaluation?

The driving evaluation completed in the clinic will take one and a half to two hours to complete. At the end of the evaluation, the occupational therapist will review the results and recommendations concerning driving ability with the client and family, if present. If an on-road assessment is recommended, this will take place on another day with the driving instructor.

Where do the results go?

The occupational therapist will send a report to the referring physician and any other requested or necessary parties. The report summarizes the results of the evaluation and the therapist's recommendations. If a client does not follow a recommendation to stop driving, a report can be sent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles. (Please Note: the Drive Safe Program is not affiliated with the Registry of Motor Vehicles and does not have the authority to revoke a driver's license.)