

RSA

NDLS

National Driver Licence Service

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta um Cheadúnais Tiomána

Your Health and Driving

This is an overview of driving with a medical condition. This is explained in greater detail in the *Sláinte agus Tiomáint: Medical Fitness to Drive (MFTD) Guidelines*. Leaflets on specific conditions are also available from www.ndls.ie/medical-reports.



Skills and abilities for safe driving

Driving is a difficult task. It needs skill and the ability to handle the vehicle and deal with what's going on outside it at the same time. You need three levels of skills and control for safe driving: strategic, tactical and operational.

Strategic	Route planning, including knowledge needed to plan effectively (e.g. weather, potential hazards).
Tactical	Driving the vehicle in traffic, including knowledge and awareness of driving laws and safe driving tactics.
Operational	Controlling the vehicle and its parts (e.g. steering, braking, acceleration, mirrors, signalling, seat belts).

Physical and Mental Abilities

Many physical and mental processes play a part in your driving skill and ability. Therefore, medical conditions that affect any of these processes can also reduce your ability to drive safely:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Perception
- Attention and concentration
- Memory
- Insight
- Judgement
- Reaction time
- Planning/organisation
- Ability to self-monitor
- Muscle power
- Coordination

Suitable support and advice can make driving safer and more comfortable.

Medical Conditions and Driving

Some medical conditions can make it harder to drive safely. These include:

Events that disable a person suddenly

Dizziness
Collapse
Epilepsy

Conditions that affect self-regulation

Psychiatric illness
Dementia (Alzheimer's disease) Mental disability

Physical impairment

Parkinson's disease

Physical disability

Poor eyesight

Substance use

Alcohol
Drugs
Medication



Temporary conditions

Some temporary medical conditions can also affect your ability to drive safely. Ask your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare professional for information and advice about when it is safe to start driving again.

Medical conditions that can affect driving

Many physical and mental processes play a part in your driving skill and ability. Therefore, medical conditions that affect any of these processes can also reduce your ability to drive safely:

- **Vision impairment**
- **Hearing loss**
- **Balance disorders**
(e.g. vertigo, dizziness)
- **Respiratory disease**
(e.g. lung diseases)
- **Chronic renal disease**
(e.g. kidney disease)
- **Alcohol and drugs**
(misuse/dependency)
- **Prescription medications**
(e.g. antidepressants, sedatives)
- **Cerebrovascular disease**
(e.g. stroke)
- **Diabetes**
- **Neurological disorders**
(e.g. Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease)
- **Epilepsy and seizures**
- **Brain tumours**
- **Traumatic brain injuries**
- **Cognitive impairment**
(e.g. dementia)
- **Peripheral vascular disease** (e.g. aneurysm and vein conditions)
- **Musculoskeletal Conditions** (e.g. loss of limb, diseases of joints)
- **General debility**
(e.g. chronic pain, slow reactions)



What you should do if you have a condition or illness that might affect your driving

You can successfully manage many conditions that can affect your driving with the help and guidance of your GP.

If necessary, you can get help from other professionals, including medical specialists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and on-road driving assessors.

You can also make suitable changes to your vehicle to help you deal with any physical weaknesses or disabilities you may have. In some cases, your doctor can recommend that you restrict your driving, e.g. drive at lower speeds, shorter distances or drive only in daylight hours.

The Road Safety Authority, the NDLS and the medical profession fully support safe mobility in the community. Therefore, we rarely decide to refuse or cancel driving licences.

Talk to your doctor

- Tell your doctor about any conditions or symptoms you have that could affect your ability to drive safely.
- Answer questions about your health truthfully.
- Follow medical advice.

Manage and monitor your condition

- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Follow any driving restrictions your doctor gives you.
- Check that you are fit to drive before setting out on your journey.
- Keep to the requirements of your licence, including regular medical check-ups.

Licensing and insurance

- Tell the NDLS if you have a long-term illness or injury.
- Tell your insurance company about any condition that might affect safe driving.
- Submit the relevant medical form (D501 Driving Licence Medical Report Form and/or D502 Eyesight Report) when applying for a driving licence.



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