



## WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN?

*People with Alzheimer's or dementia may be unsafe when they:*

- don't follow traffic signs
- go too fast or too slow
- become angry at others in the car or other drivers
- hit curbs
- cross over lanes
- confuse the brake and gas pedals
- forget where they are going
- get lost going places they know



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING  
AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Adapted from PLAIN LANGUAGE FACT SHEET, developed by Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles and Supported by DHHS, ACL (#90AL0002-01-00)

# Driving

Over time, driving gets harder for people with Alzheimer's or dementia. At some point they will need to stop driving and this can be very hard for them. It feels like a loss of freedom for both drivers and family members, yet SAFETY is most important for everyone.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Keep an Eye Out

- watch for parking or traffic tickets
- look for new scratches, marks, or dents on the car
- listen for complaints about other drivers or how the car operates

### Help Them Stop Driving

- ask the doctor to tell them they can no longer drive
- make sure the doctor files a report to alert the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of the dementia diagnosis
- have a close friend or a minister, priest, or rabbi ask your person to stop driving
- tell them someone else will drive them to the store or appointments
- ask others for help... deliver meals, pick up prescriptions, or just to visit

### Be Creative

- hide the keys
- park the car out of sight
- remove the battery or starter wire
- say the car is in the shop
- get in the car first so you can be the driver
- give a set of keys that look like the old keys but won't start the car
- make having someone else drive sound like fun

### Finally

- sell the car... it saves money on gas, insurance, and repairs that can be used for taxis, Uber, LYFT, or paying someone else to drive