

More on Driving and Safety

I want to follow-up on the article from last week (8/13) on driving safety. I received some good comments from a resident concerned that the tone of the article, lifted by me from the Harvard Health Newsletter, might have been less than helpful. In particular this resident objected to the idea of “quick fixes,” which may lead folks to downplay the real issue, which is that in almost all cases there comes a time when driving is no longer safe or advisable. Clearly from all the elders I’ve met with over the years, the loss of driving is a huge milestone which impacts lifestyle. Nonetheless, given the risk (lifetimes odds of death in motor vehicle are 1:112, #5 on the list) it is not something to take lightly. Those risks apply to not only you as driver, but to passengers, pedestrians and of course the other drivers of fast rolling steel and plastic.

I urge you to re-read the article of last week. There are many good suggestions about how you can possibly extend your safe driving years, but the most important sentence is the first one: **“Don’t ignore signs that you’re struggling at the wheel.”** As with so many tough decisions we have real trouble being objective. I urge you to ask for insights from family and friends about when the time has come to give up the keys. Until then, be conscious of the age related factors discussed, make adjustments as able and keep the question open. Wellness is about maintaining balance in living a full life. That requires attention, courage to accept the realities of change and a willingness to seek out new ways of living. We’re all working on that together!

Lathrop will be welcoming AARP for their Driver Safety program at the Northampton Meeting House on October 21