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DRIVING AFTER A STROKE

Driving is viewed not just as a 'privilege' but also as a necessity. When a stroke occurs it can affect the skills necessary for independent driving. A majority of stroke survivors can return to independent driving. The goal is to maintain safe and independent driving for as long as possible.

Adaptive equipment is frequently used for physical problems. A spinner knob can be attached to the steering wheel to allow controlled steering with the use of one hand. A left gas pedal may be used if you are unable to use your right foot to gas or brake. Training is essential with any equipment to be safe with your new adapted driving method.

Warning signs to look for are:

- Inappropriate driving speeds (too fast or too slow)
- Needs help or instructions from passengers
- Doesn't observe signs or signals
- Slow or poor decisions (poor judge of distances, too close to other cars)
- Easily frustrated or confused
- Pattern of getting lost, even in familiar areas
- Accidents or near misses
- Drifting across lane markings, into other lanes

If you, or those who drive with you, notice any of the above warning signs, you may need a driver evaluation. A driver rehabilitation specialist can provide a comprehensive evaluation to determine your ability to drive.

This assessment should include:

Vision Perception
Functional Ability
Reaction Time
Behind-the-wheel evaluation