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Age Spots - A Sunday Drive

MAY 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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My oldest son will be turning 16 soon. This is a very exciting and personally terrifying experience. We both look forward to the day he has license in hand and can truly embrace freedom in a way he has never yet experienced. Still a tiny part of me really wants him to fail the test at least the first 30 or 40 times, so I can keep him safe. So I can know where he is, and who he is with, and what he is doing.....

All of these are logical “Mom” emotions, but they can also be logical “child” emotions. Many times at Aging Matters we get calls from adult children who worry about their senior parents driving. They want advice on when to take the keys. This is not an easy thing to consider as it is the first taste of freedom for an excited teenager; it can also be the last remaining freedom for a senior.

The discussion on when someone should stop driving will vary for everyone. If there are physical limitations involved such as vision loss or dementia the conversation may come sooner than anyone wishes and some people will be good drivers their entire lives. The National Institute on Aging has an Older Drivers Age Page brochure that gives great information about physical changes that can impact older drivers and safety tips that could help older drivers stay on the road. There is also a list of Safe Driving Tips that is appropriate for those of any age. I printed out the list for my son. Some of the tips include:

- Plan to drive on streets you know
- Add extra time for travel if you must drive when conditions are poor
- Always wear your seat belt and make sure your passengers wear theirs too
- Stay off your cell phone
- Use your window defrosters to keep both the front and back windows clear
- Drive a car with air bags
- Check windshield wiper blades often and replace them when needed

AARP also has a wonderful website www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety that has helpful information for seniors who want to stay safe on the road. It is great information for those who want to ensure their parent is safe as well. There are several other resources that offer refresher courses or evaluations for older drivers. For a copy of the Older Drivers Age Page or more information on this topic, please call Aging Matters 800-392-8771.

This Sunday as you're driving down the road enjoying the beautiful weather, be on the lookout for a Mom that keeps slamming the imaginary brake on the passenger side, it is probably me.

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