



Caregiver Tip of the Month – July 2010

Notes from Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho

Family conversations about driving

Is mom too old to drive? Giving up driving is giving up her independence, so the decision comes hard. On-going conversations can help her weigh decisions, agree to drive less, or avoid driving certain times or places. What you say or don't say to older drivers does make a difference—though women heed advice more often than men.

Talk about restrictive driving before there is a need. A spouse, adult children, a doctor or other trusted friend might initiate the discussion confidentially. Emphasize how much more stressful driving conditions are today; discuss accidents in the news; or discuss how current medications affect her. You might express your concern for her getting lost.

Drive with mom and observe. Explore alternatives for getting to medical appointments, shopping, activities, before the conversation. Don't be dissuaded by an initial negative response, but during subsequent conversations, share your genuine concerns for her safety and best interest.

AARP holds Driver Safety classes about once a month in Coeur d'Alene to help older drivers hone their skills, recognize age-related changes and declining perceptions. There is a reasonable cost for an 8 hour class over the course of 2 days. One is upcoming August 6th and 7th. Kootenai Medical Center has a driver evaluation program to help determine capable driving skills through the McGrane Center.

Contact Betsy Bullard, Area Agency on Aging, at 667-3179, ext. 222, or email infoassist@aaani.org to find out more about these options and other resources. For expanded caregiver tips go to our website at www.aaani.org and click on Family Caregiving on the left hand side of the home page.