

Glaucoma and Driving for Patients

If you have glaucoma, you may want to know if you can safely drive. Driving can let you do things on your own like go to work, to the store, to the doctors, to see friends, and more. Each patient may have a different level of comfort when they drive.

How glaucoma can affect driving vision

Glaucoma can make your field of vision smaller over time. In the beginning, you may not know you have it. You may not feel the loss of your field of vision until later. For this reason, changes in your driving vision may be one of the first signs of glaucoma.

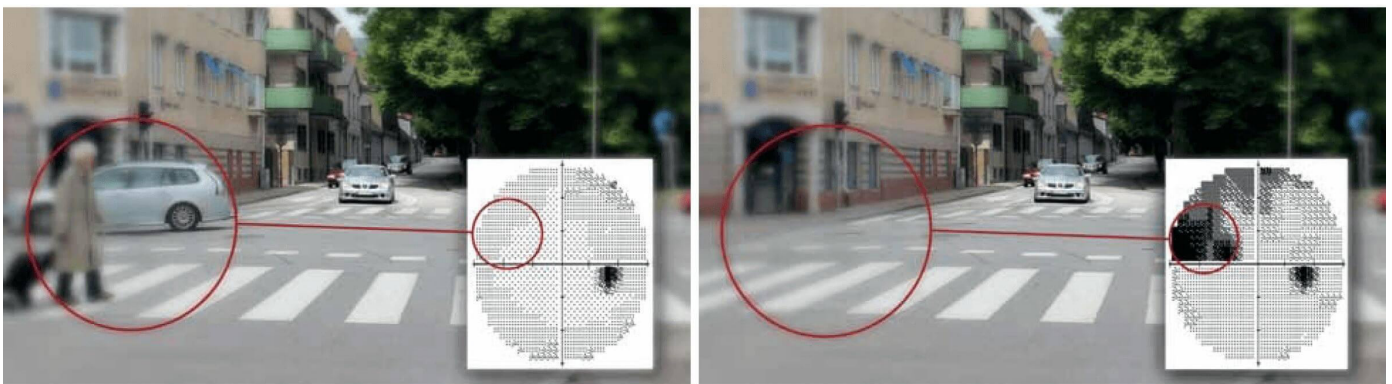
Glaucoma can also make your blind spot bigger, make you lose the way you see contrasting colors,

or make night driving worse. These can all be problems for you as a driver.

In the picture below, the person crossing the street is in the driver's missing field of vision. Even though the person is there, the driver does not see him. Depending on your amount of vision loss, you may not see something in front of you.

If you have lost some of your field of vision, you may also have slower reaction times to respond to any changes in the road. This makes driving at night even more difficult.

You may notice your own driving vision problems, or it may be your family who see it first. Glaucoma usually gets worse as you get older. At the same time, you can have other eye problems like cataracts, which can also change your driving vision.



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Driving requirements for vision

There are departments of motor vehicles rules for each state that say when you can and cannot drive. A special visual field test can be done by your eye doctor for the DMV to check your driving field of vision. Every state has its own rules. You can call your local DMV or read on their website for more info.

What you can do

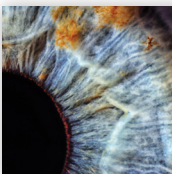
There are ways we can make sure driving is safer for everyone.

- Make sure you get regular eye exams. Eye doctors use different tests to help find out the level of field of vision and blind spots you may have.
- It is also important to keep your glasses and contact lens prescriptions up to date.
- Having sunglasses and different types of coating can help your driving vision – you can ask your eye doctor what kinds may help you.
- If you need more help, programs are available that can teach you ways to drive with your level of vision loss. They can also help put special mirrors on your car to help your driving. You can ask your eye doctor about these programs or mirrors.
- Some GPS programs can also help with driving.

What if driving isn't safe

There may come a time when your vision loss from glaucoma will make driving unsafe. You may need to stop driving. It may be difficult to change to your life and rely on others, but there are options: ride-share apps like Uber or Lyft, taxis, public buses or trains, community rides, and others.

When it comes to driving, the bottom line is safety.



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