



February, 2014



## Five Winter Driving Safety Tips for Seniors

For many people, winter is full of family, friends and food. However, winter weather may make it more complicated to get out of the house, especially when you're the one driving. Snow, ice, sleet, and cold temperatures create new challenges for senior drivers. Seniors who rely on their own vehicle for transportation should be aware that driving in winter weather requires additional safety measures and extra care. Because driving abilities change with age, senior drivers should be prepared to take some extra precautions to help them to drive safely in harsh weather conditions.

### 1. Winterize your vehicle

Give your vehicle a little extra care during the winter months. Make sure that your brakes, headlights, and windshield wipers are working properly. Also, check on the antifreeze levels, oil levels, and tires. It is important, especially for seniors, that the heater and defroster are fully functioning as seniors are more susceptible to the frigid winter temperatures.

### 2. Always have a full tank of gas

There is nothing worse than running out of gas when it's freezing and snowing outside. Keep your gas tank full during the winter months to avoid harmful condensation forming inside your gas tank and freezing in the fuel line. It may be pricey to keep your tank full, but it is less expensive than towing and repairs to frozen fuel lines.

### 3. Avoid rush hour and back roads

During heavy traffic periods, there are more people on the road and higher chances for traffic accidents. If you must go out during rush hour, be aware of black ice and traffic jams. If the roads are bad, avoid using back roads and shortcuts. Because there are fewer cars on the road, they are less likely to be plowed or salted and may be more dangerous than well-traveled roads.

#### 4. Travel with a companion

Travel companions can be great during the winter months. Not only do they keep you awake and aware, but they can also help you to navigate the slippery roads and get through heavy traffic. If you don't have someone to travel with in bad winter weather, make sure that someone knows where you're going and that you have a cell phone with you in case of an emergency.

#### 5. Prepare for an emergency

If you're traveling during the winter months, especially for an extended period of time, it is helpful to be over-prepared. Put together an emergency kit to store in the trunk of your car, including (but not limited to):

- A blanket
- Food and water
- A flashlight with extra batteries
- A first-aid kit
- Jumper cables
- An ice scraper
- Sand, salt or non-clumping kitty litter to provide extra tire traction
- Extra clothing, boots and gloves

This winter, take your time driving when the roads are snowy and slick. If you don't feel comfortable driving in the winter weather don't hesitate to ask for help. Winter weather can be challenging for senior drivers, but if you plan accordingly and are aware of the dangerous conditions, you can arrive safely at your destination.

*...Kathy Kotowski, First Light Home Care, Powell, OH, December 4, 2013 blog*

### Reduce Stress for Good Health

Here are some tips for reducing stress related to caregiving taken from [www.AgingCare.com](http://www.AgingCare.com) and written by Marlo Sollitto, August 2013:

- Use respite and healthcare resources available to you. (Don't forget JOY-spirations for Caregivers, \$14.99 on my website, [www.karenboerger.com](http://www.karenboerger.com).) Taking a break, and ensuring your loved one is well cared for is one of the best ways to reduce stress.
- If you need [financial help](#), don't be afraid to ask family members to contribute their fair share.
- Say "no" to requests that are draining and stressful, such as hosting holiday meals.
- Forgive yourself for your imperfections. There is no such thing as a "perfect" caregiver.
- Identify what you can and cannot change. You may not be able to change someone else's behavior, but you can change the way that you react to it.
- Set realistic goals. Break large tasks into smaller steps that you can do one at a time.

- Prioritize, make lists, and establish a daily routine.
- Keep in touch with family and friends and make time for yourself.
- Join a support group for caregivers. If your loved one has a particular affliction, such as [Alzheimer's or dementia](#), look for a support group targeted at that disease.
- Eat a healthy well-balanced diet and get enough sleep.
- See your doctor regularly for checkups.
- Keep your sense of humor and practice positive thinking.
- Find out about caregiving resources in your community. Your Area or Senior Agency on Aging is a great, free resource.
- If you work outside the home, consider taking a break from your job. Employees covered under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act may be able to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year to care for relatives.



## Recipe Corner

*I found an excellent recipe using cauliflower. There is no fat, low in calories, but is very tasty. My daughter-in-law thought it looked like a 7 layer bar/cookie and asked for a taste. I broke a piece off of mine and clearly she realized it wasn't a cookie, but couldn't figure out what was in it. When I told her cauliflower, she took a step back and said, "No!" She dislikes cauliflower but liked this recipe. She couldn't believe it. She's going to fix it for her daughter who doesn't like many veggies.*



### Cauliflower Patties

2 cups cooked cauliflower florets, finely chopped  
 1 large egg plus 1 large egg white  
 ½ cup onion, minced  
 3 TB fresh flat parsley, minced  
 ½ cup sharp cheddar, grated (can use low fat)  
 ½ cup bread crumbs  
 Salt/pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a cookie sheet with oil. Combine above ingredients and season with salt and pepper.

Spoon 1 TB in your hand and roll into ovals. (I just spooned a tablespoon onto the cookie sheet and shaped a little, if needed.) Bake 16-18 minutes. Then half way through baking, turn and flatten just a little.



Last month I asked for help with a research point of view. If you haven't already sent it to me, please do it now. I'm in need of some research help from each of you for a speaking event in a few months. I want to know what the JOYS that you see or feel in your caregiving. Email me at [joy4caringhearts@gmail.com](mailto:joy4caringhearts@gmail.com).



### **Meditational Thoughts**

Are you a hugger? Do you like bear hugs or shoulder hugs? Or do you just put a hand on someone's shoulder? All are good. A warm fuzzy feeling is created and we feel valued and loved. Our loved ones need those warm fuzzies but so do you. When a friend gives you a hug, tell them, "Thanks! I needed that." Other ways to show you care might be just an encouraging or funny card. It'll bring a smile. Even if you're staying close to your loved one, you can send a card to someone else who needs support and encouragement.

God shows you His love in so many ways. . .the kiss or hug of a grandchild, a wonderful friend you know you can trust, His Word through the Scriptures, a gorgeous sunrise, and the list goes on and on. How do you feel God's hugs?

