

Pedestrian safety for senior citizens



Walking is good for exercise

Walking...

- lowers blood pressure and cholesterol
- strengthens the heart and cardiovascular system
- helps increase bone density and muscle strength
- decreases stress and promotes sleep
- improves flexibility, which is vital for maintaining independence.

Walking is the most popular mode of travel for people aged 70+ and bus trips always begin and end with walking trips.

Unfortunately seniors are overrepresented in pedestrian crashes. However you don't need to give up any of the benefits of walking. There are some simple things you can do to keep yourself safe on our streets.

Make sure drivers have seen you

- Wear light, bright clothing, especially on rainy days and at dusk.
- Make sure there is adequate light for you to see and be seen.
- Don't step out from between parked cars.
- Check that you have been seen by all drivers before stepping onto the road.
- If a driver stops to let you cross, be aware of vehicles coming from the other direction.
- Establish eye contact with drivers.
- If you are unsure whether a driver has seen you, let the car go first.



Plan your route

Choose quiet streets over busy ones, even if you have to walk a little further.

Use footpaths and paths. If you are forced to walk on the road, walk facing the oncoming traffic and walk as far to the side of the road as possible.

Be careful about where you tread. The surface may be uneven. Avoid putting yourself in situations where you could fall.

Getting safely to the other side

Stop, look and listen for traffic in all directions before stepping onto the road. The safest crossing sites have few cars and clear views of traffic.

Start crossing at a pedestrian crossing only when all traffic has stopped for you.

Avoid crossing mid-block unless there is a pedestrian crossing or a pedestrian island. Many pedestrian crashes occur mid-block, where drivers don't expect to encounter pedestrians.



Crossing safely at intersections

Look for turning traffic at intersections. Drivers may be so focused on the other traffic that they don't notice you.

At pedestrian signals, start your crossing when the green figure activates, after you have checked that all traffic has stopped for you. Don't be concerned if the figure goes flashing red when you are halfway across the road. It is designed to do so - there will be enough time for you to complete your crossing before the signal goes solid red.

Don't start to cross when the figure is flashing red. There will not be sufficient time for you to get across the road. Never cross when the figure is solid red.

Other safety tips

- Wearing something fluorescent makes you more visible to motorists, even on sunny days.
- Be especially alert in car parks at supermarkets and shopping malls.
- Drivers making backing manoeuvres may not notice you. Listen for motors starting and look for reversing lights.
- Look and listen for vehicles exiting driveways. Fences and bushes may be hiding you from drivers reversing out of their driveways.
- Don't go walking if you have been drinking alcohol. You don't need to be intoxicated for alcohol to have an impact.
- Ask your doctor about the side effects of any medication you are taking.
- Walk with a friend for companionship and an extra set of eyes and ears,
- Never ride your mobility scooter on the road, except to cross from one side to the other.



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