

Driving After a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

Information from the Southwestern Ontario Stroke Network

Driving After a Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

In Ontario, your doctor or nurse practitioner (NP) will advise you about driving after a TIA. They may report to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) if you have persisting or disabling symptoms such as changes in cognition, physical abilities, vision, or if you experience seizures.

Depending on your symptoms, your doctor or NP may advise you not to drive for a period of time rather than making a formal report to the MTO. This may include waiting until your follow-up appointment in a Secondary Stroke Prevention Clinic, or until outpatient tests are completed.

Often times, this involves a wait of one month before returning to driving. Individuals presenting within 48 hours of symptoms consistent with a new acute stroke or TIA are at the highest risk for recurrent stroke. This means it might be dangerous for you to drive immediately following a TIA due to the risk of having another stroke, but this risk decreases over time.

My Return to Driving After a TIA Checklist

☐ My doctor or NP will advise me regarding my ability to drive after a TIA

AND/OR

☐ I will be advised not to drive for a period of time (often up to 30 days), or until I have follow-up in a Secondary Stroke Prevention Clinic

AND/OR

☐ My doctor or NP may want further tests or an on-road assessment before saying that I am safe to drive

The Rules in Ontario Say:

- Your doctor or NP must assess your medical readiness to drive
- Your readiness to drive must be evaluated before you return to driving

If there is sufficient concern about your ability to drive, your doctor or NP must report this to the MTO. The MTO will review the report and decide whether to suspend your driver's license. You will be notified of the decision by the MTO.

It is illegal to drive with a suspended licence.

Driving After a TIA

What is the process to return to driving?



Medical Clearance

Your doctor or NP will determine if you are safe to resume driving before you start driving again. Consult them if you have any questions or if you are unsure whether you are safe to drive after completing your tests.



Further Testing

Your doctor or NP may refer you to an occupational therapist or a therapy assessment program for further testing to help determine if you are safe to return to driving.



On-Road Assessment

The MTO, your doctor, or NP may require you to take further specialized testing at an Approved Functional Assessment Centre for drivers to ensure your driving skills are meeting the standards for driving in Ontario.

If your licence has been suspended, the letter from the MTO will explain next steps and provide information on finding an approved Functional Assessment Centre for drivers. Read more information about the medical review process online at: <https://shorturl.at/FLzvg>

How can I find out about the status of my licence and file?

1. Check the status of your licence online with your licence number and find contact information: <https://www.dlc.rus.mto.gov.on.ca/dlc/>
2. Call the Medical Review Section of the Ministry of Transportation – Service Ontario: (416) 235-1773 / Toll-free: 1-800-268-1481

What if I do not agree with the MTO decision?

If you do not agree with the final decision of the MTO, you can appeal the decision. Instructions on how to appeal will be included in the letter from MTO.

This resource was developed by the members of the Southwestern Ontario Occupational Therapy Stroke Network in alignment with the Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations. Information was adapted with permission from “Driving after a stroke” (© 2011) From Hamilton Health Sciences, Hamilton ON Canada.

Inquiries can be made to swosn@lhsc.on.ca; Last Updated: July, 2024