

Driving after Brain Injury

You have been given this leaflet because you have sustained a brain injury / bleed to the brain or have suffered severe head injury involving in-patient treatment. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

Driving

Although we may take it for granted, driving is a very complex activity requiring several cognitive and physical skills, as well as the ability to co-ordinate these. Any of these skills may be impaired after a brain injury.

Can I drive after brain injury?

Fortunately, many people who have sustained a brain injury retain most of their previous driving abilities and are able to return to driving soon afterwards. However, you must adhere to certain legal requirements.

It is sensible to take precautions such as having a driving assessment, even if you feel that your driving skills remain intact. It should be remembered that a car is a potentially lethal weapon: many people with a brain injury were themselves injured in a road traffic collision.

It can be relatively straightforward to make adaptations to a vehicle to compensate for physical disabilities. However, the less obvious effects of brain injury – on thinking, memory, judgement, decision making and emotions – can be more difficult to overcome.

Ultimately, the decision on whether someone is safe to drive lies with the licensing authorities.

If you drive and have had a brain injury, you **must** inform the licensing authorities. This applies to any 'notifiable' condition which could affect your ability to drive and failure to inform the authorities could result in a fine of up to £1,000. It would also mean that your licence is not valid and that you would be uninsured in the event of an accident.

As a rule, the medical standards state that after a traumatic brain injury, drivers with an ordinary car or motorcycle (Group 1) licence should cease driving for six to 12 months, depending on factors such as post-traumatic amnesia, seizures and clinical recovery. Other forms of acquired brain injury have slightly different rules but if there are lasting impairments which affect driving ability then the licence is likely to be removed for a period.

However, because every brain injury is different, each case is considered on an individual basis

Please do not drive until you have spoken to the DVLA and told them about the change in your health that stops you from driving. You will need to fill in a form to report your medical condition (form FEP1). You can find this online on the DVLA website. You will need further investigation and advice from a specialist doctor about when you can start driving again. Where can I get more information? Please visit www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions You could be fined up to

£1,000 if you don't tell the DVLA about a condition that might affect your ability to drive safely. You could also be prosecuted if you have an accident.

Useful sources of information

DVLA

[Medical conditions, disabilities and driving: Telling DVLA about a medical condition or disability - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/medical-conditions-disabilities-and-driving)

Headway: Driving after brain injury
[print \(headway.org.uk\)](https://www.headway.org.uk)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this leaflet, please contact the Major Trauma Nurse Practitioners on 020 8725 2363 (Monday to Sunday, 8am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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