

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder for this information for ease of reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

Smart Auto Features for Older Drivers

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200834

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior,

Are there any good resources that offer tips on what older drivers should look for when purchasing a new car? My wife and I have been looking around, but at ages 69 and 71 we want to make sure we get a good vehicle that meets our future needs and current budget.

Senior Drivers

Dear Senior,

The National Older Driver Research and Training Center at the University of Florida and AAA recently developed a handy new guide called "Smart Features for Mature Drivers" that's perfect for seniors who are in the market for a new car or those evaluating their current one. Here's what you should know.

Shopping Guide

Even healthy seniors face some degree of physical challenge (reduced vision, mobility, strength, range of motion and reaction time) that can make driving more difficult. Finding a vehicle with features that meets those challenges can make a big difference in both pleasure and safety.

"Smart Features for Mature Drivers" is a great tool to help seniors evaluate a vehicle by focusing on the different features that address age-related problems. Here are some of the features they recommend you look for, depending on what ails you.

Limited range of motion: Drivers with limited flexibility in the neck, back and arms usually have a difficult time looking over their shoulder to back-up or to merge into traffic and have a hard time reaching for their seat belt too. These drivers can benefit from large, wide-angle mirrors which minimize blind spots, a tilt and telescoping steering wheel that offers more comfortable positions to alleviate neck and shoulder pain, adjustable seat belts that are easier to reach and heated seats with lumbar support to help those stiff, achy backs.

Limited mobility: If you suffer from hip or leg pain or limited knee range of motion, look for vehicles that have low door thresholds, six-way adjustable power seats, and seat heights that come up to your mid-thigh level. These features make it easier for you to get into and out of the vehicle.

Arthritic hands: Drivers who have hand or wrist arthritis or a weak upper body can benefit from thick steering wheels which are easier to grip, keyless entry and ignition that eliminates twisting and turning, power mirrors and seats that are easy to operate, larger dashboard controls with buttons versus knobs that are easier to manipulate, and four-door models versus two-door cars which have longer heavier doors that are harder to open.

Diminished vision: Drivers with diminished vision and sensitivity to glare will find extendable sun visors helpful, as well as larger audio and climate controls with contrasting text which are easier to see.

Short drivers: For older drivers that are small in stature, it can be a challenge to comfortably reach the pedals without being too close to the airbag or being able to see over the steering wheel safely. To help with these problems, look for vehicles with adjustable foot pedals, tilt and telescoping steering wheel and six-way adjustable seats.

Safety Features

AAA also recommends that all seniors, regardless of their health issues, look for vehicles with solid safety features and a proven safety record. Start by checking the vehicle's crash test and rollover ratings which you can find at www.safercar.gov. Other safety features to look for include: side and dual-stage/threshold airbags that adjust the deployment force based on the severity of the crash, adjustable head restraints and extra padding that moves forward to cushion the head, reducing neck injuries when a car is hit from the rear, antilock brakes that prevents the wheels from locking during emergency braking; and dynamic stability control which helps prevent loss of control in a turn.

Savvy Tip: To get a copy of the "Smart Features for Mature Drivers" brochure, call your local AAA (call 800-564-6222 to get your local number). You can also view it online at www.aaa.com/seniors along with their list of 2008 vehicles that provides these senior-friendly features.