

3.3 Staying Independent

Getting Around: Driving and Transport

This Help Sheet gives information about how PSP affects driving ability and suggests ways that people with PSP and their families and carers can continue to get around once driving is no longer possible.

Driving

Driving involves complicated interactions between the eyes, brain and muscles of the body. People with PSP can experience a range of symptoms that may affect their ability to drive safely.

Some of the problems people with PSP may experience with driving include:

- Blurred vision
- Difficulty judging distance or the speed of other cars
- Slower reaction time
- Confusion about traffic rules or difficulty navigating a route

Some people with PSP can continue to drive in the early stages, depending on their symptoms. However, anyone who is diagnosed with a condition that may affect their driving ability, such as PSP, is required to notify their state or territory licensing authority and their insurance company. The licensing authority will generally advise the driver to see a doctor who will assess whether it is safe to keep driving for a period of time. Occupational Therapists can also assess driving ability and advise on specific driving problems. By having a valid assessment stating that you are competent to drive, you are protecting yourself legally and for insurance purposes, should an altercation arise.

For reasons of safety, people with PSP have to stop driving at some point, often earlier rather than later.



*For PSP information and support phone
Parkinson's Australia on 1800 644 189*





Getting around

Finding alternative ways of getting around can make it easier to give up driving.

Buses and trains run in most areas. It helps to plan your trip and obtain timetable information in advance. If you are not familiar with using public transport it may help to ask a friend or family member who is a regular public transport user to show you how it works. Concession fares may be available.

Taxis are a convenient form of public transport, offering door-to-door service. Wheelchair-accessible taxis are available through some taxi companies. Schemes offering a subsidy on fares are available to some people with disabilities in some states and territories.

Community transport is available in some areas, providing bus or car transport for social and/or medical trips. Contact your local council for information about community transport in your area.

Patient transport services may assist with transport to medical appointments. These services may be operated by a private provider, your local ambulance service or the Australian Red Cross. Some services may be available at no cost or at a reduced cost for eligible patients attending certain appointments. Ask your doctor or health professional for further information.

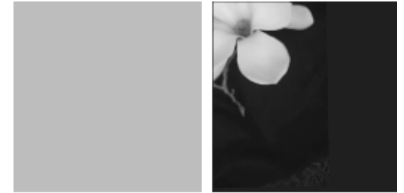
Using a car

Getting in and out of a car can be difficult for people with PSP due to problems with movement. Accessories are available to make this easier, including:

- Turntables which can be placed on the car seat or on the ground to help turn the person around into a normal car seat.
- Car seats that swivel, slide and/or lift
- Car roof-mounted hoists to assist with transferring the person from the car seat to a wheelchair.

Further information is available through the Independent Living Centre on 1300 885 886 or visit: www.ilcaustralia.org.au

Disability parking schemes are provided across Australia offering the use of accessible parking permits to eligible people with disabilities. Contact your local council for information about how to apply for a disability parking permit in your state or territory.



Using a Wheelchair

Wheelchair use can help to increase your mobility and maintain your independence. In the early stages of PSP it can be useful when, for example, attending a crowded event. As the condition progresses, wheelchair use may become essential in order to get around

The wheelchair should be individually fitted with the advice of a physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

Specially adapted vehicles

Many people find that the best long-term solution for people with PSP is to purchase a vehicle that has been specially adapted to carry a manual or powered wheelchair. Unfortunately this can be expensive and there is no widely-available scheme in Australia to subsidise the cost of an adapted vehicles. Second-hand adapted vehicles are also available and some companies offer adapted vehicles for hire. The Independent Living Centre can provide further information and a list of suppliers in your area. Contact 1300 885 886 or visit www.ilcaustralia.org.au

For further information about living with PSP, including the full range of PSP Australia Help Sheets, visit: www.psp-australia.org.au

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