

My Dad's Vision Isn't as Good as He Thinks, but He's Still Driving.... *NOW WHAT?*

Q A few months ago my father had his cataracts fixed. His vision is better, but it's not safe for him to drive: He still sometimes mistakes the shoulder for a lane or fails to notice a One Way sign. I've asked him to tell his eye doctor, but because the operation improved his vision somewhat, he insists there's no need. What can I do?

ract surgery. Fixes include artificial tears and dietary changes, Packer says. In rare instances, complications can arise after cataract surgery—but most complications are treatable, says Richard L. Lindstrom, M.D., founder of and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants. If the new lens doesn't fit neatly in its bag-shaped membrane (called the capsular bag), the surgeon might have to reposition it. And if the capsular bag has clouded up after surgery, a laser treatment in the doctor's office can fix it, Lindstrom says.

So there's hope. The real problem is how to convince your father to tend to his eyesight—and to stay off the road until he does.

Julie Lee, AARP's driver-safety expert, recommends AARP's online course on talking to elders about driving (aarp.org/weneedto talk). For starters, tell your dad exactly what worries you. Maybe he's running stop signs; maybe cars are honking at him. Talk to your father like a pal.

Better yet, see if a family friend will do the talking. "It's tough coming from a child," says Lee.

—Miriam Karmel

ANSWER: Lens replacement can be a miracle cure—a surgeon removes the eye's cloudy natural lens and replaces it with an artificial intraocular lens (IOL), rapidly improving vision. But as with any big change, adjustments may be needed. Traditional IOLs provide crisp vision either close up or at a distance, but usually not both. If your father chose IOLs that are better for reading, he may need new driving glasses, since a prescription can change significantly following cataract surgery, says Mark Packer, M.D., a clinical associate professor at Oregon Health & Science University. (A new kind of IOL, known as multifocal, corrects both near and distance vision.)

Your dad may also be dealing with dry eye, another treatable cause of blurred vision after cata-

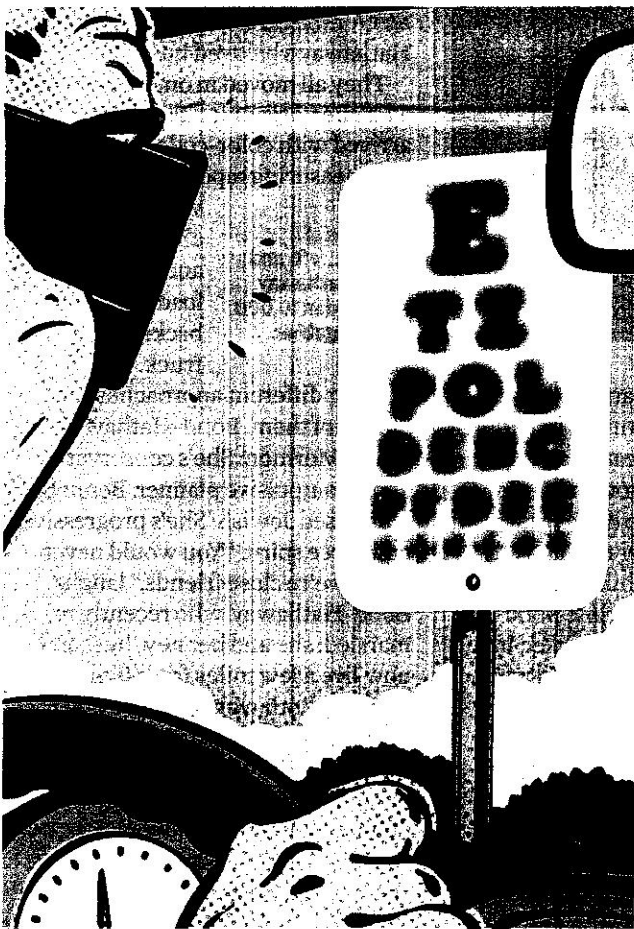


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DRIVE SMARTER

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