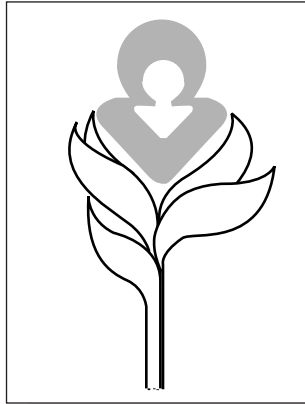


Huntington's Disease Association



Huntington's Disease and Driving

Fact Sheet **13**

Huntington's Disease and Driving

Our society values independence highly and the ability to drive is held in high esteem; however holding a licence to drive is a privilege, not a right, and as such we have a responsibility to ourselves, and to others, to ensure that we drive safely and lawfully.

It is important that all drivers are aware of the legal position regarding disability and driving and that we realise the consequences of failure to disclose relevant information. Complying with the law does not automatically mean that your licence will be revoked.

The Law

In the UK there is a legal duty for driving licence holders to inform the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea when they are aware of a “relevant” or “prospective” disability that could affect their ability to drive.

GPs and other doctors are responsible for informing patients of their medical condition and may advise their patients to stop driving; however the onus is on the individual to inform the DVLA.

Relevant Disability includes:

- Conditions likely to be applicable to Huntington's disease
- Epilepsy
- Severe mental disorders
- Persistent difficulty with the use of arms or legs
- Any other disability likely to cause the driving of a vehicle to be a source of danger to the public
- Any other condition likely to last for more than three months

Prospective Disability means any other condition which by reason of its intermittent or progressive nature may become a relevant disability in the course of time. This includes degenerative conditions.

Huntington's disease

- People who are at risk of Huntington's disease are not obliged to inform the DVLA of their risk status as long as they remain well.
- Similarly people who have been given a positive test result but are pre-symptomatic are not obliged to inform the DVLA of their risk status; however when symptoms of Huntington's disease begin to develop you must inform the DVLA of them.
- People who have had a positive diagnosis of Huntington's disease should inform the DVLA of this in order to comply with the law as stated above.

People with Huntington's disease may refuse to accept advice to declare their disability or to stop driving and this can cause disagreements and anxiety for carers and family members.

In exceptional circumstances it is possible for a doctor to inform the DVLA without their patient's consent.

The DVLA ignores anonymous letters; however, signed communications will be treated confidentially and concerns acted upon.

You ought to inform your insurance company at the same time; if they are not told they could refuse to indemnify in the event of a claim.

Consequences

Failure to disclose information that relates to an individual's medical fitness and which affects his/her ability to drive can lead to penalty points, disqualification, and a fine.

- LC30 Driving after making a false declaration about fitness when applying for a licence.
- LC40 Driving a vehicle having failed to notify a disability.
- LC50 Driving after a licence has been revoked on medical grounds.

The above licensing offences each incur 3-6 penalty points and/or disqualification and stand as offences in their own right. If further offences are incurred whilst driving ie careless driving, reckless driving, speeding, etc, penalties and fines incurred will be steeper.

Insurance

It is an offence to drive whilst uninsured against third party risks in the UK and any accident that occurs whilst uninsured is likely to incur considerable expense. Failure to disclose relevant information to your insurance company may result in their refusal to cover you in the event of an accident thus invalidating insurance cover.

What happens next?

The power to grant, refuse or revoke a driving licence lies with the Secretary of State via the DVLA which has a Medical Advisory Unit staffed by medical personnel. Medical assessment of disability is undertaken by the Medical Advisory Unit and your general practitioner.

The DVLA has a number of options available to them which may include:-

- restricting your driving licence to 1, 2 or 3 years, which enables a regular medical review to take place.
- requesting a re-test.
- revocation of your licence.

If you are in doubt about whether you need to inform the DVLA.

1. Ask your doctor for advice
2. Write to the Drivers Medical Group, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU.
3. Telephone Customer Enquiries Unit on 08702 400 009.
4. Contact the Huntington's Disease Association, address overleaf.

The medical rules for fitness to drive are explained in leaflet D100 obtainable at main Post Offices.

Fact sheets available from the HDA:

1. All about the Huntington's Disease Association
2. General Information about Huntington's Disease
3. Predictive Testing for Huntington's Disease
4. Talking to Children about Huntington's Disease
5. Information for Teenagers
6. Eating and Swallowing Difficulties
7. Huntington's Disease and Diet
8. The Importance of Dental Care
9. Communication Skills
10. Behavioural Problems
11. Sexual Problems
12. Huntington's Disease and the Law
13. Huntington's Disease and Driving
14. Advice on Life Assurance, Pensions, Mortgages etc.
15. Seating, Equipment and Adaptations
16. Checklist for Choosing a Care Home
17. Advance Directive or "Living Will"

Booklets

Huntington's Disease in the Family (1997)

A booklet produced for young children

For a publication order form, membership form, details of our Regional Care Advisers and local Branches and Groups, please telephone or write to:

Huntington's Disease Association

Down Stream Building, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7022 1950 – Fax: +44 (0) 20 7022 1953

Email: info@hda.org.uk

Web: www.hda.org.uk