

What if I can't drive again?

If your licence is permanently cancelled, you should get another form of identification. The RTA issues photo identification cards.

There are alternative means of transport for people unable to drive. Your hospital social worker can help you investigate your options, such as:

- **Community transport:** volunteer drivers can help you get to medical appointments or your local shopping centre.
- **Various community groups:** some have vehicles to assist with transport within the community.
- **Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT):** may be able to provide assistance with transport, shopping and other practical support needs. Assessment and approval for this scheme is needed. Those over 65 are given preference.
- **Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme:** reduces the cost of taking taxis. Some drivers will give you their mobile number and arrange regular times to collect you for appointments. Assessment and approval for this scheme is needed.
- **Disability Parking Permit (also known as Mobility Parking Scheme):** you may be eligible for a permit which could be used when driven by others.
- **Public Transport:** vision-impaired people may be able to get a concession card (reduced fare) from Transport NSW.

Where can I get more information?

To learn more about driving and brain tumours, contact:

- your doctor or treatment team
- Cancer Council Helpline – 13 11 20, www.cancercouncil.com.au
- Carers NSW – 1800 242 636, www.carersnsw.asn.au
- Australian Association of Occupational Therapists NSW – (02) 9648 3225, www.otnsw.com.au
- NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) – 132 213, www.rta.nsw.gov.au
- Transport NSW – (02) 9268 2800, www.transport.nsw.gov.au
- Austroads – (02) 9264 7088, www.austroads.com.au
- National Transport Commission (NTC) Australia – (03) 9236 5000, www.ntc.gov.au



For more information on patient support call Cancer Council Helpline 13 11 20

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Note to reader

The information in this guide has been prepared by medical professionals and it is not intended to provide an alternative to any other relevant professional advice. It does not contain legal or medical advice or serve to substitute for medical judgment in the particular circumstances presented in each patient situation. It should be considered as information only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease or condition.

This brochure is intended for use by consumers, patients or their families.

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Brain Tumours and Driving

A guide for patients and carers

This brochure will answer your questions about:

- how a brain tumour may affect your ability to drive safely
- how a doctor will decide if you're fit to drive
- what happens if your licence is suspended or cancelled
- how to get your licence reissued
- other transport options.



Many people with a brain tumour want to know if they will be able to continue driving.

Driving is a complex task. Every driver has to be able to observe their environment, look for potential hazards, process the information and react quickly.

A brain tumour can cause symptoms that affect a person's ability to drive safely. You might have symptoms such as:

- visual changes
- physical changes, such as weakness or impaired motion, sensation and coordination
- changes in thinking and processing information, including different perceptions, reaction times and memory
- personality changes affecting your emotions, judgments and insight.

You or your carer may be aware of these symptoms, but this isn't always the case. Sometimes people don't realise the changes caused by the brain tumour.



What are my responsibilities?

You are legally required to notify the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) about your condition. The RTA is the government organisation responsible for licensing in NSW.

The RTA provides the final decision on your licence. However, the RTA will make this judgment based on medical reports provided by your doctor.

Your doctor will assess whether you are medically fit to drive based on:

- the national medical standards for licensing, published by National Transport Commission (NTC) Australia and Austroads, the association of Australian and New Zealand road and traffic authorities
- your situation (e.g. the type of brain tumour you have and your symptoms, treatment and medication).

Your doctor may refer you to a specialist occupational therapist (OT) for a driving assessment. The focus of the assessment is to evaluate whether your medical condition or treatment is affecting your ability to drive. Each licence class you hold (car, motorcycle or heavy vehicle) will need to be assessed.

The OT may teach you driving techniques to compensate for your weaknesses or instruct you on how to use car modifications (such as special mirrors). If this isn't possible, the OT may have to recommend that your licence be temporarily cancelled or downgraded.

What happens if I'm unfit to drive?

If your specialist considers you medically unfit to drive, they will send a medical report to the RTA. The RTA will make a decision about your licence based on your specialist's assessment.

Even if you don't agree with the cancellation of your licence, you must stop driving. If you continue driving, you may be criminally liable in the event of an accident. Your insurance will be null and void.

Your fitness to drive will be reviewed regularly. If your licence is cancelled, it's not necessarily permanent.

Your feelings about being unable to drive

Many people feel upset if they are unable to drive, even if it's temporary.

Not being able to drive can be frustrating and stressful. It can disrupt your life and make it harder to do daily tasks. You might find it difficult to lose some independence and rely on others.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. Your doctor understands what the loss of your licence means to you. However, it is their legal responsibility and duty to try to keep you, your potential passengers and the general public safe.

It may help to talk to your doctor or a counsellor about how you are feeling. You can also ask how regularly they will review your fitness to drive.

How can I return to driving?

If you or your carer feels you are fit to drive, you will need to consult your doctor. Your doctor must complete an RTA medical form clearing you to drive.

You may be referred to an OT in your area to complete a driving assessment. The OT will determine if your medical condition or treatment is affecting your ability to drive, and they will recommend if you should hold a full licence or a conditional licence that restricts you in certain ways. (For example, you may be permitted to drive short distances, only in daylight or in a limited area from your home.) If you have significant issues, the OT will recommend that you are unfit to drive and have your licence suspended or cancelled.

Once your doctor considers you fit to drive, you will be given the RTA medical form. You can post or deliver this form to the RTA.

You must wait for the RTA to make the final decision about your licence. If your licence was cancelled, you may be required to undergo lessons or an RTA driving assessment before your licence is reissued.

In most cases, the RTA will require regular medical reviews after you have regained your licence.