

Your medicines and driving



You are taking the following medication which may affect your ability to drive safely

Medication:

.....

Dose (how much):

Frequency (how often):

Started / changed on: / /

Strong painkillers (or opioids), sedative medication and some other medicines may cause drowsiness as their intended use or as a side effect and this may vary from person to person.

They may make some people drowsy, meaning your reactions can be slower than usual. This can affect your ability to drive safely. This may be worse if you take several medicines such as anti-sickness medicines and other medicines used for pain, for example, gabapentin, pregabalin and anti-depressants or if you drink alcohol or take non-prescribed drugs such as cannabis.

You may have noticed that the label on your medicine says:

“May cause drowsiness. If affected do not drive or operate machinery. Avoid alcoholic drink.”



Your healthcare team may also have discussed side effects of your medicines with you. It is your responsibility to make sure your driving ability is not impaired and you may wish to consider the information in this leaflet before driving.

Medications are more likely to affect your driving ability and you should not drive if:

- You have just started taking them.
- The dose has been changed recently.
- You are taking other medications that can cause drowsiness (including medicines bought over the counter).
- You are taking breakthrough or rescue doses e.g. for pain, breathlessness or anxiety.
- You take any amount of alcohol (however small) or drugs such as cannabis.



It is not against the law to drive whilst being on a strong pain killer as long as:

- You have taken it according to the instructions given by the prescriber or the information provided with the medicine and it is not affecting your ability to drive safely.
- You are taking the same dose of strong painkiller (normally for at least 5 days) and you do not feel drowsy or unwell.
- You carry a copy of your prescription and / or the original box/packaging with you, so that traffic police can verify your prescription if required.

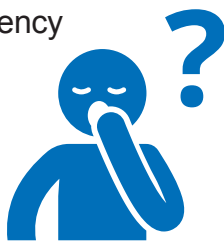


It is advisable to ensure that the first time you drive after you start or change one of these medications, the journey should be short, familiar, during daylight and not at a time when there is a lot of traffic.



Other considerations that may affect your ability to drive safely:

- If you develop any signs or symptoms suggesting your driving may be affected such as sleepiness, poor co-ordination, difficulties with your thinking, dizziness, or eyesight difficulties.
- If you have severe pain, pain which distresses you, or you feel drowsy or are unable to concentrate properly.
- Anything that makes you less able to make a sudden emergency stop with your vehicle.



If you think that your medicines or condition are affecting your driving, then you should stop driving and discuss the problem with your GP / treating hospital or palliative care team.



Drivers Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

You do not need to inform the DVLA that you are starting a strong painkiller. However, there may be other information about your illness or condition that the DVLA needs to know. You must tell the DVLA if you have a driving licence and you develop a 'notifiable' medical condition or disability, or if a condition or disability has worsened since you got your licence. Your GP / treating hospital or palliative care team or the DVLA can advise you about this.

Find out more about driving with a medical condition below

How to contact the DVLA

<https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>

DVLA Medical Enquiries
Telephone: 0300 790 6806

DVLA Webchat is also available


You will need to know your driving licence number when you contact them.

What about my car insurance company?

You should tell your car insurance company about your current state of health, and what medication you are taking.

Each insurance company is different and you may be asked to pay a higher premium for car insurance as a result. However, failing to give your insurer full medical disclosure could invalidate your policy.





**For further
assistance
and advice**

Contact us

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