

RSA



MEDICINES AND DRIVING

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Medicines and Driving

Many medicines can reduce your ability to drive safely. These include:

- medicines that are prescribed by your doctor,
- non-prescription medicines from your pharmacy (often called 'over the counter' medicines), and
- herbal medicines or supplements.

The harmful effects increase if you take more than one of these medicines or take any of them with alcohol.

It is an offence to drive while affected by medicines that reduce your ability to drive safely.

What medicines affect driving?

The following medicines have side-effects that may reduce your driving ability.

- Sleeping tablets
- Anti-depressants
- Sedatives, tranquilisers or other medicines for anxiety
- Some pain killers
- Some allergy or hay fever medicines
- Many cough and cold remedies (can cause drowsiness or poor co-ordination)
- Some anti-nausea medicines
- Some medicines for epilepsy
- Some medicines for high blood pressure or heart conditions
- Some medicines for diabetes



This list is not complete. You should check with your doctor or pharmacist if **your** particular medicines risk affecting **your** ability to drive safely.

You may need to take extra care when starting on some medicines. Your doctor or pharmacist may advise you not to drive at all until the effects of the medicine are known.

Remember, the effects of medicines can be increased if they are combined with alcohol or other drugs or medicines.

In what way can these medicines affect my driving?

Some medicines can make you feel sleepy, dizzy or less alert or can affect your co-ordination. As a result, your judgement and your driving skills can be affected.

If you have **any** of the following effects from your medicine(s), your ability to drive safely may be reduced and you may be driving 'under the influence' of drugs.

- Sleepiness or feeling drowsy
- Slower reaction times
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness or feeling light-headed
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Poor co-ordination
- Nausea (feeling sick)
- Feeling anxious, tense or aggressive

What should I do to make sure I do not drive under the influence of medicines?

- Always follow the instructions given by the GP or pharmacist.
- Always read the label and information leaflet with the medicine. If you don't understand anything, ask your GP or pharmacist.
- If prescribed a medicine, always ask your GP or pharmacist if the medicine will affect your driving. If it does, ask if you can take another medicine instead.

- If you are getting non-prescription medicines from a pharmacy, check with the pharmacist if the medicine affects driving. Be sure to tell them also what other medicines you are taking and ask if it is safe to drive when taking that combination.
- Always check if drinking alcohol could affect how a medicine works.
- Remember that you may not always be aware if **your** medicine is affecting your ability to drive safely. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about your medicine and the potential risk.
- **Never** take medicines prescribed or recommended for someone else.
- If you feel unwell or think your medicine may be affecting your ability to drive safely, **don't risk it, don't drive.**

What does the law say about driving and medicines?

According to the Road Traffic Acts, 1961 – 2006, it is an offence to drive, attempt to drive or intend to drive a vehicle while under the influence of an intoxicant* to the point that you cannot keep proper control over the vehicle.

*An 'intoxicant' includes alcohol, illegal drugs and medicine and any combination of drugs or of drugs and alcohol.

Working To Save Lives

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