

# Information for drivers taking medication

## ARE YOU SAFE TO DRIVE?

Have a 'safe to drive' conversation with your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.



**It can be unsafe to drive when taking medication which impairs/affects your driving ability.**

**IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO DRIVE WHEN YOU'RE IMPAIRED.**

Many prescribed medications (or those purchased over-the-counter) can impair your driving, as can many recreational drugs. It's important you talk honestly with your health practitioner about your medication (and anything else you're taking) so they can help you stay safe on the road.

Some of these prescription medications may impair your driving:

- Strong painkillers
- Depression medication
- Heart medication
- Allergy medication
- Sleeping tablets
- Anti-psychotic medication
- Epilepsy medication
- Addiction treatment
- Nausea medication
- Anxiety medication.

Not every medication in each type listed above will impair driving. Find out if you're at risk.

Impaired driving is when your body or emotions have been affected (usually temporarily) in a way that makes you an unsafe driver. You need to make sure you're safe to drive before you get in the car.



**1 IN 4**  
prescriptions are  
for medication that  
can impair driving

You need to have a 'safe to drive' conversation with your health practitioner about your medication. To avoid driving while impaired you may need to:

- **avoid driving altogether when taking your medication**
- **consider avoiding driving at first when taking your medication**
- **not drink alcohol while taking your medication.**

Before you drive, always check for any of these symptoms:

- **Feeling drowsy/sleepy**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Headache**
- **Feeling weak**
- **Slowed reactions**
- **Dizziness**
- **Nausea, feeling sick**
- **Unable to focus or pay attention**
- **Being easily confused**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Having trouble forming a sentence**
- **Feeling wired and overconfident (although you may not notice yourself).**

Be a responsible driver when taking medication:

- **Always take medication according to the instructions.**
- **Don't stop taking medication because you want to be okay to drive.**
- **Check how you're feeling after you start a new medication. Talk to your health practitioner if you're concerned.**
- **Check whether you can drink alcohol when taking your medication.**
- **Ask your health practitioner how long the effects last. Some medications taken at night may affect you the next morning.**
- **Don't keep driving if you feel impaired. Call someone to pick you up or take a bus or taxi.**
- **Talk to your health practitioner about all medication or drugs you're taking - prescription, over-the-counter and recreational.**



**Not being able to drive doesn't have to disrupt your life. It's usually only temporary. Your health practitioner can help you find alternatives or could change your medication or dose so you're able to drive again.**

IN THE LAST  
12 MONTHS



**2 OUT OF 3 DRIVERS**  
USED MEDICATION  
THAT MAY IMPAIR  
DRIVING



see [www.nzta.govt.nz/medication](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/medication) for more info