

PRESCRIBED OR OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS DRIVING ADVICE September 2023

1. What are the risks?

Medicines help restore health or suppress conditions such as hay-fever or allergies but may cause side effects that impact fitness to drive. These could pose a danger to yourself, your passengers and other road users.

These side effects include feeling drowsy, slower reaction times, restricted coordination, difficulty concentrating, or blurred vision. These affect the ability to make appropriate and timely driving decisions.

2. What should I do?

If you are being prescribed a medication or buying one over the counter always alert the GP, pharmacist, or health care professional that you are driving, and check whether the medication will impact your ability to drive. Always read the information on medication packaging and follow the directions and warnings.

Commonly prescribed drugs identified on www.gov.uk are:

- Amphetamine, for example dexamphetamine or selegiline
- Clonazepam
- Diazepam
- Flunitrazepam
- Lorazepam
- Methadone
- Morphine or opiate opioid-based drugs, for example codeine, tramadol, or fentanyl
- Oxazepam
- Temazepam

Careful checks also need to be made regarding:

- Medicines that are prescribed under different names. If you don't recognise your medication on this list check with your GP
- A change in dosage
- A new prescription is given. Checks then need to be made to ensure there is no risk of a negative interaction with an existing medication

Other advice is:

- When prescribed a new medication consider arranging alternative transport and suspending driving until you discover the effect the medicine has on you.
- Have a copy of your prescription in your glove compartment. This could be in a Lions Club 'message-in-a bottle' container with your personal and other health information. These bottles are available free from GP surgeries and pharmacists
- Never be tempted to use a friend's prescribed medication.

Medications can make driving safer, so continue to take medicines for the period prescribed by your doctor.

3. What is the legal position?

It is illegal to drive with legal drugs in your body:

- **If it impairs fitness to drive**
- **You have over the specified limit of certain drugs and have not been prescribed them**

If convicted of drug driving you may get:

- A minimum 1-year driving ban
- An unlimited fine
- Up to 6 months in prison
- A criminal record

Your driving licence will also show you have been convicted of drug driving. This will last for 11 years.

Conviction for drug driving also means:

- Car insurance costs will increase significantly
- If you drive for work or are a volunteer driver your employer or organisation will see your conviction on your licence
- You may have trouble travelling to countries like the USA

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