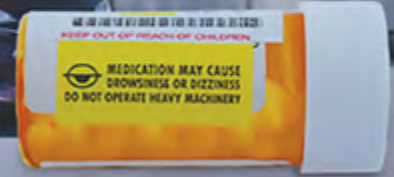


Dangers of Driving After Taking Prescription Drugs or Over the Counter Medicines

There's More Than One Way to Be Under the Influence



It is a well known fact that driving under the influence of alcohol is illegal, but not everyone realizes the dangers of driving after taking drugs — including prescription and over the counter medications. **Many legally obtained and commonly used OTC and prescription drugs can affect a user's ability to drive safely.**

Antidepressants, opioids, and other prescription drugs may cause impairment.

If you are taking a prescription drug, or get a prescription for a new medicine or a higher dose of a current drug, do not drive until you know what effect it has on your judgment, coordination, and reaction time. Additionally, certain medications may not impair you on their own, but if taken with a second medication or with alcohol, they may cause impairment. Know that warnings against “operating heavy machinery” include driving a vehicle.

Commonly used over the counter medications can put drivers at risk.

Cold and allergy medicines, sleep aids, and other OTC medications can cause side effects, including drowsiness, nausea, and blurred vision — all of which can put everyone on the road at risk.

[There's more than one way to be under the influence.](#)

It doesn't matter what term you use: If a person is feeling a little high, buzzed, stoned, wasted, or drunk, he or she is impaired and should not get behind the wheel. Before leaving the pharmacy, understand the warnings about the drugs you are taking. **If you are taking a prescription or over the counter medication that may impair your driving, you should not drive.**

There's More Than One Way to Be Under the Influence.

Beware of the effects that prescription and over the counter drugs may have on your driving ability.

There's more than one way to be under the influence. Impaired driving is generally associated with alcohol, prescription drug abuse, or illegal drug use. However, many legally obtained and commonly used over-the-counter and prescription drugs can affect a user's ability to drive safely.

Cold and allergy medicines, antidepressants, opioids, and sleep aids can cause side effects, including drowsiness, nausea, and blurred vision, all of which can put motorists at risk. Despite being illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, impaired driving is still one of the most significant dangers on our roadways.

Read and follow all warning labels before driving, and note that **warnings against “operating heavy machinery” include driving a vehicle.** Update your knowledge of drug impaired driving, and review our resources to learn more about this dangerous driving behavior.

10% of weekday, daytime drivers surveyed tested positive for prescription and/or over the counter drugs.

Based on results of the 2013–2014 National Roadside Survey:
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/behavioral-research/2013-14-national-roadside-study-alcohol-and-drug-use-drivers>

The survey tested for the presence of prescription or over the counter drugs, not driver impairment. The number does not include drivers who tested positive for prescription or over the counter and illegal drugs.

UPDATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Some prescription drugs can induce drowsiness, cause nausea, affect judgment, and lessen coordination, all of which can prove fatal when driving.
2. Over the counter drugs may cause drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, irregular heartbeat, or shakiness. Users should avoid operating motor vehicles if they are experiencing any side effects from the medication.
3. Prescription drugs such as opioids, sedatives, muscle relaxants, and some antidepressants have been associated with increased crash risk.
4. Some medications may not impair you on their own, but if taken with a second medication or with alcohol, may cause impairment.
5. Violating state DUI laws that make it illegal to drive impaired by any substance can result in arrest. This includes prescription drugs and over the counter medications.

