

Medication Safety

While medications are prescribed to make you feel better, certain medications or combinations of medications can impair driving ability by causing side effects such as sleepiness/drowsiness, blurred vision, dizziness, slowed movement, fainting, nausea, excitability, and inability to focus or pay attention. In fact, some states consider driving under the influence of certain prescribed and over-the-counter medications the same as driving under the influence of alcohol.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, products that can make it dangerous to drive include: prescription drugs for anxiety; some antidepressants; products containing codeine; some cold remedies and allergy products; tranquilizers; sleeping pills; pain relievers; diet pills, “stay awake” drugs, and other medications with stimulants.

It is important to talk with your healthcare professionals at least once a year about the medication(s) you are taking, including prescription, over-the-counter and herbal supplements, even if your medications and supplements are not currently causing you a problem. If you are experiencing side effects that could impact your driving ability, your doctor may be able to minimize it by:

- adjusting the dose;
- adjusting the timing of doses or when you use the medicine;

- adding an exercise or nutrition program to lessen the need for medicine; or
- changing the medicine to one that causes less drowsiness.

When a new medication is prescribed for you, always ask about side effects and how it might affect your ability to drive. In addition, always remind your doctor and pharmacist of other medication(s) you are using, especially if you see more than one doctor. And be sure to take all medications as they are prescribed. If you are not using all or any of your prescribed medication(s), tell your healthcare professionals immediately.

Each person is unique and may respond differently to medicines. Learn how your body reacts to certain medications and supplements by keeping track of how you feel after taking it. For example, do you feel sleepy? Is your vision blurry? Do you feel weak and slow? When do these things happen? If you are experiencing side effects, inform your doctor immediately so that he or she can adjust or change your medication.

Resource:
www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/driving_taking_meds.htm/

To speak with an EAP professional, please call: **800.327.2384**

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