

## Driving and pain medications

### **Am I able to drive whilst taking medications prescribed for pain?**

Medications prescribed to help manage pain may cause side effects such as dizziness or sleepiness and so may impair your driving ability.

It is against the law to drive whilst impaired due to medicines and you must not drive if this is the case.

### **What symptoms may mean I cannot drive safely?**

Do not drive if you experience symptoms that may impair your driving such as sleepiness, poor coordination, impaired or slow thinking, dizziness or visual problems.

### **When might I be at risk of my driving being impaired?**

Do not drive when the risk of experiencing these symptoms is highest. This includes when first starting the medication or when increasing or reducing the dose.

Take care in circumstances that may increase the risk of your driving being impaired, for example if:

- another prescribed medication is added that could also impair your driving
- you take an over the counter medicine that could also impair your driving
- you develop a medical condition that could impair your driving.

Be aware that alcohol taken in combination with some pain medications can substantially increase the risk of accidents.

## **Do I need to inform the DVLA?**

You do not need to routinely inform the DVLA when you start medications for pain. However, there may be other information about your illness that the DVLA needs to know. Your doctor or the DVLA can advise you about this.

## **Do I need to inform my motor vehicle insurance company?**

We would advise you to inform your motor vehicle insurance company about your current state of health and what medication you are taking. It is best to inform them of your current circumstances to ensure you are covered.

## **Does the 2015 Drug Driving law affect me?**

If you have been prescribed one of the following medications you may be affected by this law: **Morphine, Ketamine, Clonazepam, Diazepam.**

From 2015 there has been a new offence of driving above a specified limit for these medications (like the current rules on alcohol and driving). If you are stopped and tested by the police you may test above the legal limit – depending on the dose you have been prescribed or the type of medicine.

If however you are taking these medications in line with advice from a Doctor or Pharmacist **and your driving is not impaired** you may use a 'medical defence'.

If the police are satisfied that a driver is taking the relevant medicine on the advice of a healthcare professional, and your driving is not impaired, you should not be prosecuted.

It may be useful for you to keep suitable evidence with you (such as a copy of your clinic letter and prescription) to show the police if you are ever stopped.

**It remains the responsibility of all drivers to decide whether they consider their driving is, or might be, impaired on any given occasion. Do not drive if this is the case.**

If you would like this leaflet in large print, braille, audio version or in another language, please contact the General Office on 01872 252690