

# Prescription Medicines

**It is an offence in England and Wales to drive with legal drugs in your body if it impairs your driving.**

It is also an **offence to drive** if you have over the specified limits of certain drugs in your blood and you have not been prescribed them at that dose.

**Talk to your GP, Pharmacist or healthcare professional** about whether you should drive if you have been prescribed any medication you are unsure about, especially any of the following drugs: ■ **clonazepam** ■ **diazepam** ■ **flunitrazepam** ■ **lorazepam** ■ **methadone** ■ **morphine** or **opiate and opioid-based drugs**, eg **codeine**, **tramadol** or **fentanyl** ■ **oxazepam** ■ **temazepam**

**You can drive** after taking these drugs if:

- you have been prescribed them and followed advice on how to take them by a healthcare professional, **and**
- they are not causing you to be unfit to drive\*

**How does the law affect you if you are taking prescription medicines?** You should continue taking medicine(s) as advised by your doctor or healthcare professional, or according to the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine. The law gives the police powers to test and arrest drivers suspected of driving after taking certain controlled drugs in excess of specified levels. It also provides a **medical defence\*** if you are taking medicine in accordance with instructions from a healthcare professional or an accompanying leaflet, **provided you are not impaired**. If you drive and take prescription medicine, it may be helpful to keep evidence of this with you in case you are stopped by the police.



**Certain medicines, substances and alcohol may affect your ability to drive**

**If in doubt...check it out!**



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**Over the Counter medication(s)** There are some medicines that you can buy over-the-counter from your pharmacy that have the potential to cause drowsiness. It is vital that you read the instructions before taking any medicine; this includes the leaflet inside the box as well as the information on the outside of the packaging. If you are taking medication that can cause drowsiness you should not drive or operate machinery if affected. If you have any queries or are unsure you should ask your pharmacist before taking any medicine.

## Prescription misuse

### Penalties for drug driving

If you are convicted of drug driving you will get:

- a minimum 1 year driving ban
- an unlimited fine
- up to 6 months in prison
- a criminal record

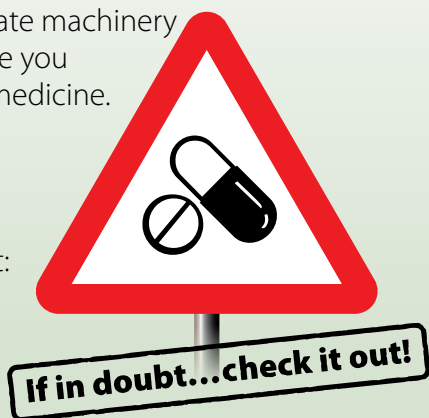
Your driving licence will also show you have been convicted for drug driving. This will last for 11 years.

The penalty for causing death by dangerous driving under the influence of drugs is a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

### Other problems you could face

A conviction for drug driving also means: ■ your car insurance costs will increase significantly ■ if you drive for work, your employer will see your conviction on your licence ■ you may have trouble travelling to countries like the USA

**\*'Medical defence'** If a patient is stopped and investigated by the police for drug-driving, they can raise a medical defence if they are taking the medication for therapeutic purposes, and in accordance with the advice given by the prescriber who supplied the drug. However, the police can still prosecute under existing road traffic offences for driving while impaired through drugs, for which there is no medical defence available.



## For further information contact:

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**For more information please visit the Norfolk County Council website at: [www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk)**