

If you require further advice  
please contact your GP or  
phone 111

## Strong painkillers and driving

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## Introduction

You have been prescribed a strong painkiller.

Strong painkillers can cause drowsiness and slow down your reactions particularly if you are on other medications.

### **The law on driving whilst taking strong painkillers**

The law changed in March 2015. If you are taking certain drugs (prescription and non prescription) above a specified limit you could be breaking the law if you drive after taking them.

However, if you take your medication as prescribed by the doctor AND your driving is not affected, then you are not breaking the law.

It is your responsibility to know how your medication affects you before you drive.

You also cannot drive if you are not fully in control of your car at all times.

This would include situations where you are in too much pain to concentrate on the road or you have a splint / plaster in place that inhibits joint movements.

## Informing the DVLA

You do not need to tell the DVLA you are taking a strong painkiller.

There are, however, many medical conditions that you do need to inform the DVLA about.

Your doctor or the DVLA can give you further advice.

## Insurance

You may need to inform your car insurance company about your health condition and what medication you are taking. You should discuss this with your insurance company to make sure you are covered.

## Important points

- If you are taking medications as prescribed and your driving is not affected, then you are not breaking the law.
- Take medications as prescribed and, if you are concerned speak to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medicine.
- Do not drive until you know how your medication affects you; this may take up to 5 days.
- Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or if your vision is affected.
- If your driving is impaired, you are breaking the law even if you have taken your medication as prescribed. Your insurance will also be invalid.