



**St Peter's
Hospice**

Driving and medicines - staying safe

**This leaflet gives information and
advice on strong medicines that may
impact your ability to drive**

This leaflet gives information and advice to patients who are taking certain strong medicines who also may wish to drive.

The law and driving

It is against the law to be over the limits specified for some drugs whilst driving, similar to drink-driving. The list of drugs includes certain medicines that our patients may be taking and includes:

- Strong opioid painkillers like morphine or oxycodone
- Medicines for anxiety such as lorazepam, diazepam and clonazepam

This law was designed to guard against dangerous drivers who are impaired after recreational use of drugs. However, you should be aware that your medicines may affect your ability to drive safely.

If you are driving with any of the medicines over the specified limits, in the body, you will not be breaking the law providing you are:

- Able to provide proof that you have been prescribed these medicines
- Taking them according to the advice of your prescriber or the leaflet in the medicine package
- Not impaired and driving safely

Suitable proof that you are taking the medicine as prescribed might include a copy of your prescription, the leaflet in the medicine packet or a letter written by a health care professional. You may wish to carry proof with you whilst driving. For further information on this new law go to

www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

How medicines can affect your driving

Strong medicines can affect each person in different ways. They may cause some drowsiness which can cause you to react more slowly than usual. These effects can be made worse if taking other medicines (such as medicines for hay fever, depression and epilepsy) or drinking alcohol. If you are taking medicines that may impact your ability to drive:

ONLY DRIVE

- If you feel 100% safe to do so
- When there is no doubt in your ability - it is your legal responsibility to consider whether or not your driving is, or might be, impaired. IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE.

DO NOT DRIVE

- If you have symptoms that might impact on your driving such as poor concentration, slowness of thinking, sleepiness or poor coordination
- For at least 5 days when first starting strong painkillers or changing the dose. Sometimes it can take longer than 5 days for the sleepiness or other impairment wears off
- For at least 3 hours after taking extra short-acting or immediate-release doses of strong painkillers

Restarting driving

When you feel 100% safe to drive, begin by making a short trip to somewhere familiar, preferably in daylight. You might find it helpful to drive with a companion, who may take over driving if required.

Insurance Companies and the DVLA

You should inform your insurance company of your illness and medication, to check that you still have insurance cover. You may not need to inform the DVLA but insurance companies generally advise this. If in doubt, discuss with your doctor or the DVLA Medical Enquires helpline on 0300 790 6806.