

Car insurance

You may need to inform your motor insurance company about your current state of health and what medication you are taking.

Each insurance company is different. Check your insurance policy or discuss your circumstances with your insurance company to be sure that you are covered.

Your medical specialist or your GP can help you decide when it is safe to drive. If you have questions about the information in this leaflet please don't hesitate to ask your doctor.



How to contact the NZTA

Telephone number for licensing enquiries:

0800 822 422

You will need to have your driving licence number available

Website site:

www.nzta.govt.nz

Address:

Victoria Arcade, 44 Victoria Street,
Private Bag 6995, Wellington 6141, New Zealand

Contact us:

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Driving and Strong Medications for Pain Control



If you drive, you may be wondering if it is safe.
Please read this leaflet carefully, it will help you to decide.

■ ■ How pain medicines affect people

Strong pain medications affect each person in a different way. Strong pain medications make some people drowsy and reactions times can be slower than usual. This may be worse if you take other medicines or tablets that cause drowsiness, or if you drink alcohol. Some medication can affect your eyesight.

Pain medicines commonly prescribed to control pain include:

- **Anticonvulsants**

Gabapentin (Neurontin, Nupentin),
Sodium Valproate (Epilim)
Carbamazepine (CBZ)

- **Benzodiazepines**

Clonazepam

- **Tricyclics**

Amitriptyline, Clomipramine, Doxepin,
Dothiepin, Nortriptyline

- **Opioids**

Codeine, Tramadol, DHC

- **Strong opioids**

Methadone, Fentanyl, Buprenorphine, Morphine
(m-Eslon, LA Morph, RA Morph, Sevredol),
Oxycodone (Oxynorm, Oxycodone CR/Oxycontin)

- **Other non opioid**

Clonidine, Dantrolene, Baclofen, Flecainide

Space prevents mention of all medications. Brand names change from time to time so check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist whether your medication is in one of these categories.

■ ■ Advice about driving if you take strong medications

General health, past exposure to medications, weight, and medication taken for other conditions can cause different responses to medication. Strong medications to control pain should not affect your ability to drive when they have been adjusted to suit you. However, it may take some time to adjust without side effects likely to affect your ability to drive.

- Avoid driving if you experience drowsiness, dizziness, feel unsteady or have blurred vision or when your doctor advises you not to.
- When you are prescribed medication for another health condition, or obtain them from the chemist e.g. hay fever medicine, you must re-assess your ability to drive.
- You should ensure your reactions have not been slowed.
- Drinking alcohol or taking non-prescribed strong drugs e.g. cannabis alters your tolerance to prescribed medication and lowers your ability to drive safely.
- On days where you take extra (breakthrough or rescue) doses of strong pain relieving medication e.g. oxycotin, oxynorm, sevredol, you must reassess your ability to drive safely.

Generally this would NOT be a safe situation for driving.

YOU have a responsibility to remain safe when driving. It is important for YOU to regularly reassess your ability to drive. If poor co-ordination or concentration affects your ability to do household and other tasks, you must not to drive.

■ ■ Restarting driving

When you are confident that your medication is not causing side effects such as drowsiness, dizziness, feeling unsteady or blurred vision you can start driving.

A close friend or family member may help you decide if you are ready to drive. Judge your ability to drive on how well you are managing to cope at home.

Make your first trip:

- Short
- On roads that you are familiar with
- At a time when traffic is not too busy

You may find it helpful to have an experienced driver accompany you to begin with in case you find that you are unable to complete your journey.

■ ■ New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)

You do not need to inform NZTA that you are starting a strong pain medication. However, there may be other information about your illness that the NZTA needs to know. If you are concerned, the NZTA can advise you about this.