

RESOURCES

Prescription Medications and Driving: What Are The Hazards?
California DMV
bit.ly/DMV_Drugs_Driving

Drugs, Herbs, and Supplements | Medline Plus
U.S. National Library of Medicine
bit.ly/Medline_NIH

Drugs, OTCs & Herbals | Medscape
bit.ly/Medscape_Drugs

Dangers of Driving After Taking Rx & OTC Drugs | NHTS
bit.ly/NHTSA_Drugs_Driving

Prescription & OTC Drugs & Driving | AAA
bit.ly/AAA_Rx

Older Adults and Medications | AAA
bit.ly/AAA_Older_Adults

Some Medicines and Driving Don't Mix
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
bit.ly/FDA_Meds_Driving

CITATIONS

de Gier, J. J., Alvarez, F. J., Mercier-Guyon, C., & Verstraete, A. G. (2009). Prescribing and dispensing guidelines for medicinal drugs affecting driving performance. *Drugs, Driving and Traffic Safety*, 121-134.

Hetland, A., & Carr, D. B. (2014). *Medications and Impaired Driving: A Review of the Literature*. *Ann Pharmacother*, 48 (4), 494-506.

Katzung, B., & Trevor, A. (2015). *Basic and Clinical Pharmacology* (13th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.



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TRANSPORTATION
RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
FOR DRIVING SAFETY

MEDICATIONS AND DRIVING

THE PROBLEM

Driving injuries are a major cause of disability and death. The use of certain medications increases the risk of these injuries, especially in older adults who are more likely to use prescription medications and engage in polypharmacy. Medications can affect vision and perception, decision making, reaction time and maneuvering – making it a challenge to safely operate a vehicle. Research tells us:

- 78% of drivers age 55 and older use at least one prescription medication with the potential to impair driving
- Two-thirds of people age 65 and older take five or more daily medications that can impair their safe driving ability
- 34% of seniors are prescribed medications by more than one clinician, possibly bypassing opportunities to check for interactions

GUIDELINES FOR CLINICIANS

- For seizures, psychosis and depression, the driving risks of the disease may be greater than the driving risks of the medications
- Counsel patients about the potential impact of medications on driving ability; take into consideration their condition and possible interactions with OTC drugs
- Advise patients to use alternative transportation if taking medications with side effects that can impair driving
- Comply with California's requirement to report lapses in consciousness associated with an underlying condition. A reduction in alertness due to medication side effects falls under this reporting requirement (CA HSC 103900)



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MEDICATIONS WITH POTENTIAL DRIVING-RELATED SIDE EFFECTS*

Class	Side Effects		Least Offending	Most Offending	
ALPHA BLOCKERS	dizziness drowsiness fatigue	hypotension nausea syncope	silodosin tamsulosin (with caution)	doxazosin prazosin terazosin	
ANTIDEPRESSANTS	drowsiness hypotension syncope		bupropion SSRIs (with caution) SNRIs (with caution)	MAOIs mirtazapine	tricyclics trazodone
ANTIDIABETICS	hypoglycemia nausea		exenatide metformin gliptins - alogliptin - linagliptin - saxagliptin - sitagliptin - vildagliptin	glinides - nateglinide - repaglinide	insulin liraglutide sulfonylurea
ANTIEMETICS	blurred vision confusion drowsiness hypotension	incoordination poor judgment poor muscle tone syncope	ondansetron	chlorpromazine metoclopramide	prochlorperazine promethazine
ANTIHISTAMINES	blurred vision drowsiness hyperkinesia		fexofenadine levocetirizine loratadine	cetirizine chlorpheniramine dimenhydrinate	diphenhydramine hydroxyzine meclizine
ANTIHYPERTENSIVES	hypotension syncope		ACEIs ARBs calcium channel blockers thiazide diuretics	beta blockers calcium channel blockers loop diuretics	
ANTIPARKINSONIANS	confusion dizziness drowsiness headache hypotension	incoordination nausea poor judgment poor muscle tone syncope	Caution in all classes		
MUSCLE RELAXANTS	confusion drowsiness incoordination	poor judgment poor muscle tone	Caution in all classes		
PAIN MEDICATIONS	confusion drowsiness	nausea poor judgment	acetaminophen NSAIDs (with caution)	indomethacin narcotic analgesics	
SOMNIACS	altered consciousness ataxia	hypotension incoordination nystagmus	eszopiclone zaleplon	barbiturates benzodiazepines diphenhydramine	temazepam zolpidem zopiclone

* Due to the dynamic nature of medical and pharmaceutical knowledge, there is no guarantee of completeness, relevance or accuracy of this guide. This guide is for reference only, and is not intended for use as a substitute for professional opinion.