

Patient information

Driving and prescription drugs - the law

It is illegal in England, Scotland and Wales to drive with certain drugs in your body above a specific level (as is the case for alcohol).

In 2015 the government's list of drugs was updated to include a number of prescription drugs / medications, but with these drugs the law is a little more complicated.

The drugs (and some common prescription uses) are:

- **Amphetamines** (e.g. Dexamphetamine or Selegiline: used in ADHD and Parkinson's disease)
- **Clonazepam** (epilepsy, muscle spasms, anxiety)
- **Diazepam** (epilepsy, muscle spasms, anxiety)
- **Flunitrazepam** (anxiety, sleep problems)
- **Lorazepam** (anxiety, sleep problems)
- **Methadone** (chronic pain, opioid dependence)
- **Morphine and other opioids such as Codeine, Fentanyl, Oxycodone or Tramadol** (used in acute pain)
- **Oxazepam** (anxiety, sleep problems)
- **Temazepam** (anxiety, sleep problems)

If you drive with certain levels of these drugs in your body and have **not been prescribed them**, you could be prosecuted.

However, you may drive after taking these drugs (even if above the specified limit) **if:**

1. You have been prescribed the drug and have taken them in accordance with the instructions from your healthcare provider, or the patient leaflet that came with them and

2. They are not causing you to be unfit to drive.

This is what is referred to as a medical defense.

What will happen if I'm stopped by the police?

The police may use a roadside assessment of your fitness to drive and/or use a roadside drug test kit to detect some of these drugs. If you are deemed unfit to drive then you will be arrested and taken for further tests at the police station.

However, if you have been prescribed these medicines, have been taking them according to instructions and your driving is not impaired, you have not broken the law.

What should I do if I need to take one of these medicines?

- Keep taking your medicines as prescribed.
- Check the product leaflet that comes with your medicines for information on how the medicine may affect your driving ability.
- Do not drive after taking your medicines until you know how they affect you.
- Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or make decisions or if you have blurred or double vision.
- If your driving is impaired then you are guilty of breaking the law.
- It may be helpful to keep evidence of your prescription with you in case you are stopped by the Police.

Key messages

- It remains an offence to drive if your ability is impaired by drugs.
- If you are taking your medicine as directed and your driving is not impaired, then you are not breaking the law
- If you are in doubt, you should not drive.

For further information on this new law, go to:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/drug-driving