

## The Risk of Prescription Drugs

Driving is a complex task which depends on vision, decision making, reaction time, coordination, and divided attention.

Many prescription drugs and over the counter medications can adversely affect such skills and impair driving ability and place you and others on the road at risk.

## How does prescription medication affect driving ability?

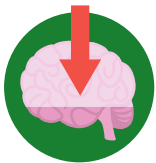
Side-effects of prescription medication can impair driving ability by:



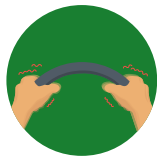
Causing drowsiness



Slowing reaction time



Affecting mental concentration



Causing shakiness



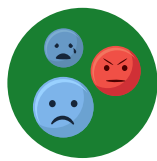
Affecting coordination



Blurring vision



Causing confusion



Creating mood changes or anxiety

These effects may make it unsafe to drive, cycle or use machinery...

during the time you take the medication

and

during the period afterwards (the 'hangover effect')



Approximately

**21%**

of fatal road collisions (2007-13 in Victoria) involved prescription drugs<sup>12</sup>



However, according to the Australian Drug Foundation,

**1 in 4**

Australian drivers ignore medication warning labels and drive after taking prescription drugs<sup>11</sup>



## Which medications could affect my driving ability?

**>400** prescription medications may affect driving<sup>3</sup>, including those commonly used for...



pain relief



anxiety or depression



cough, cold & flu symptoms



sleep problems

Remember, even over-the-counter medicines and herbal remedies can affect your driving.

Taking multiple medications, and even a small amount of alcohol can increase impairment.

## How can I stay safe on the road while taking prescription medication?

- Avoid mixing your medications with other drugs and alcohol
- Understand the effects of your medication
- Follow the label instructions
- Monitor yourself; be aware of your body's reactions
- Always ask your doctor for advice

Example:

This medication may affect mental alertness and/or coordination. If affected, do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery.

## Note:

In Australia, it is illegal to drive while impaired by drugs, whether or not they are prescribed.

Drivers are responsible for reading the labels and consulting their doctors.

Call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) on 1300 85 85 84 for more information and support

