

MEDICATION & ITS EFFECT ON DRIVING



Driving is a complex skill requiring mental alertness, clear vision, physical coordination and the ability to react appropriately, which can be affected by changes in our physical, emotional and mental condition. Most of us are aware of the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, but certain types of medication produce effects that impair our ability to drive a vehicle safely.

These medications include over-the-counter medication as well as scheduled medication, prescribed by the doctor.

According to the New Mexico Department of Health, certain drugs can interfere with coordination, reaction time, judgment, tracking, attention and perception.

The effect is to impair your ability to drive.

Care should be taken with medication developed to treat sleeping difficulties, anxiety, depression and stress, pain, allergies, colds and flu, arthritis, blood pressure, epilepsy, heart conditions, fluid retention, nausea and motion sickness, stomach problems, diabetes, some types of infections, muscle relaxants, sedatives and tranquilizers, anticonvulsants and central nervous stimulants.

This is not a comprehensive list, therefore it is important to ask your doctor or pharmacist if the medication you are taking, whether over-the-counter or prescription medicine, may affect your driving or mental alertness. Valuable information regarding the side effects of a particular medicinal product can also be obtained by reading the package insert, or leaflet inside the package.

If the medication you are taking affects your driving, stop driving immediately. Do not stop taking your medicine, but

seek advice from your doctor or pharmacist.

Other factors which may have an effect on an individual's responsiveness to medication may include the length of use, tolerance, overall health, age, metabolism, individual sensitivity to the medication and interactions with other medicines.

In addition, the side-effects of medication may be more severe if you start a new medication, combine medications, take more than the prescribed dose and consume alcohol with your medication.

Please be aware that this information is provided to supplement the care provided by your doctor or pharmacist. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Call your healthcare provider immediately if you think you may have a medical emergency. Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health provider prior to starting any new treatment or with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

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