

Drowsy driving: *Know the signs*

Drowsy driving is the combination of driving a vehicle and being overly tired. It might happen if you didn't sleep well the night before. It can also happen if you take medicines that make you tired. Sometimes people who work long shifts or the night shift are drowsy when they drive home from work.



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Experts believe drowsy driving causes tens of thousands of car crashes each year.

Driving when you're drowsy is a lot like driving drunk. Drowsy driving can:

- Make you less aware and less attentive
- Slow down your reaction time
- Make it hard for you to make decisions while you're on the road



HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M DROWSY?

Signs of being too tired to drive include:

- Yawning or blinking a lot
- Not being able to remember some of your trip
- Missing your turn or exit
- Drifting out of your lane or off the road
- Hitting rumble strips



WHAT TO DO

If you think you're driving while drowsy, pull over in a safe place. If you can, get some coffee or a caffeinated drink. Then lock the doors and take a 15- to 20-minute nap in your vehicle. The caffeine and nap combination may help you be more alert.

Opening the windows and loud music don't help you stay awake. When your body needs sleep, it will do almost anything to get it.



PREVENT DROWSY DRIVING

The best way to prevent crashes from drowsy driving is to:

1. Get enough sleep. If you can't get the sleep you need, have someone else drive you to your destination.
2. See your doctor if you think you might have a sleep disorder.
3. Never drink alcohol before driving.
4. Never take medicines that make you drowsy before driving.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Sleep Foundation