



DROWSY DRIVING: ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

DRIVE ALERT AND STAY UNHURT.
Learn the risks of drowsy driving and how to protect yourself.

WHAT IS DROWSY DRIVING?

Drowsy driving is the dangerous combination of driving and sleepiness or fatigue. This can happen to a driver for several reasons



THE DROWSY DRIVING PROBLEM

Drowsy driving is a major problem in the United States. Falling asleep at the wheel is clearly dangerous, but being sleepy affects your ability to drive safely even if you don't fall asleep. Drowsiness—

- Makes drivers less able to pay attention to the road.
- Slows reaction time if you have to brake or steer suddenly.
- Affects a driver's ability to make good decisions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Up to
6,000 fatal crashes
each year may be caused by drowsy drivers



WHO'S MORE LIKELY TO DRIVE DROWSY?

- **Commercial drivers** who operate vehicles such as tow trucks, tractor trailers, and buses.
- **Shift workers** (work the night shift or long shifts).
- Drivers with **untreated sleep disorders** such as one where breathing repeatedly stops and starts (sleep apnea).
- Drivers who **use medications** that make them sleepy.
- Drivers who do not get **enough sleep**.



LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF DROWSY DRIVING

- **Yawning** or **blinking** frequently.
- **Difficulty remembering** the past few miles driven.
- **Missing** your exit.
- **Drifting** from your lane.
- **Hitting** a rumble strip on the side of the road.



For more warning signs visit the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

If you experience any of these warning signs
PULL OVER TO REST OR CHANGE DRIVERS.
Simply turning up the radio or opening the window are not effective ways to keep you alert.

PREVENT DROWSY DRIVING, BEFORE TAKING THE WHEEL

There are a few things you should do before taking the wheel to prevent driving while drowsy.



Get enough sleep! Adults need **7 hours** and teens need at **least 8 hours**.



Develop good sleeping habits such as sticking to a sleep schedule.



Avoid drinking alcohol or **taking medications** that make you **sleepy**. Check the labels.



Talk to your doctor about treatment options if you have a sleep disorder or symptoms such as snoring



If you notice the warning signs of drowsy driving while driving, **pull over** to a safe place and take a **15-20 minute nap** or **change drivers**.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep

CS260638-A