



# WAKE UP CALL: ANYONE COULD BE AT RISK FOR DROWSY DRIVING

## 8 SIGNS OF DROWSY DRIVING



1. Having trouble keeping your eyes open and focused
2. The inability to keep your head up
3. Daydreaming or having wandering, disconnected thoughts
4. Drifting from your lane or off the road or tailgating
5. Yawning frequently or rubbing your eyes repeatedly
6. Missing signs or driving past your intended exit
7. Feeling irritable and restless
8. Being unable to remember how far you have traveled or what you have recently passed

## FEELING DROWSY?

Here's what DOESN'T work according to studies:

- ✗ Rolling down the window
- ✗ Turning up the radio
- ✗ Turning up the AC
- ✓ The best strategy is to pull over and sleep for a long 20-30 minutes or if on a long trip, stop for the night.



Most people are aware that they should never drink and drive. Alcohol impairs a driver's judgment, the ability to make quick decisions and overall driving performance. But did you know that driving while drowsy—whether due to lack of sleep, even a small amount of alcohol or the use of some prescription or over-the-counter medication—can also delay reaction time, decrease concentration and reduce judgment skills?

## DROWSY DRIVING BY THE NUMBERS

Drowsy driving is estimated to contribute to as many as **1.2 million collisions**, resulting in potentially **5,000 to 8,000 fatalities** per year.<sup>1</sup>

Drivers who sleep **less than five hours** per night are **six times more likely** to be involved in a drowsy-driving-related crash than drivers with eight hours of sleep or more.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly **1 in 3 drivers** (31.5%) admit that at some point in the past month they drove when so tired that they had a **hard time keeping their eyes open**.<sup>3</sup>

## 6 WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF REST BREAKS

- 1 **Safety experts recommend taking a break when driving every two hours or 100 miles.** Look for a safe, populated rest area.
- 2 **If you pull over for coffee, rest for about 20 minutes while you wait for the caffeine to take effect.** The intensity of its effect will depend on your body's particular reaction to caffeine and the amount consumed.
- 3 **An alternative to caffeine is to pull over at a rest area and take a walk.** A study concluded a brisk 10-minute walk increased energy for two hours.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 **Taking 10 minutes to stretch at a rest stop is also a good option.** Focus on your neck, feet (particularly your driving foot), lower back and torso.
- 5 **Make smart snack choices.** Choose nuts or an apple and a bottle of water over sugary treats and drinks.
- 6 **Sometimes just changing activities can re-energize you.** While pulled over, take the opportunity to check messages and return calls and e-mails. This will remove these distractions from your mind and allow you to better focus on the drive once you're back on the road.

## DROWSY, DISTRACTED, OR FOCUSED... YOUR DECISIONS DRIVE YOUR SAFETY

References for all pages can be found at <http://trafficsafety.org/dsw/dsw-2016-materials/references>

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# KNOW WHEN YOU SHOULD NOT GET BEHIND THE WHEEL

## BE WARY OF CRUISE CONTROL

According to a recent study,<sup>9</sup> cruise control may contribute to drowsiness and slower reaction times. The study found that using cruise control increased reaction time by an average of one second when drivers had to respond to a change on the road ahead.

When using cruise control for extended periods, be sure to increase your following distance so you have room to take full control of your vehicle again, and take more rest breaks to help you stay alert.

- Research shows that after roughly 17 to 19 hours of being awake (for example, rising at 6am and staying up through 11 pm–1 am), performance on a range of tasks is equivalent to that of a person with a blood-alcohol level of 0.05 percent.<sup>7</sup>
- After approximately 20 hours of being awake, performance is as bad as that of someone with a blood-alcohol level of 0.10 percent, which exceeds the legal definition of intoxication in the United States.<sup>8</sup>
- The above doesn't only apply if you miss one night's sleep completely; if you get too little sleep over several nights, you'll see similar results.



## BEFORE YOU TAKE THE WHEEL

- ✓ **Get fueled up with a good night's sleep.** Aim for 7-8 hours every night.
- ✓ **Recharge with exercise.** Before you hit the road, get moving for 10 minutes with a brisk walk or take the stairs to give yourself a natural boost of energy. (Consult a physician before starting a new exercise regimen, if previously inactive.)
- ✓ **Park in the back of the lot.** It's another good way to get your body moving and energized prior to getting behind the wheel.
- ✓ **Arrange to travel with a passenger when possible.** Vehicles in which the driver is accompanied by a passenger are nearly 50% less likely to be involved in a drowsy-driving-related crash.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **Make sure the trip is necessary.** If traveling for a work meeting, is there an option for a teleconference or webinar?

## GOT TEEN DRIVERS?



Teens need 8–10 hours of sleep per night, yet they rarely get it.

Because of their unique natural sleep rhythms, teens have a hard time falling asleep before 11 pm, and their brains stay in sleep mode until at least 8am, according to the National Sleep Foundation. The challenge is that most school start times are earlier than 8am. Since teens may have difficulty going to bed early to get the sleep they need, it can help to keep the lights dim at night as bedtime approaches and to get into bright light as soon as possible in the morning.

Talk to your teen about the signs of drowsy driving so they know when they should pull over for a break or call home for a ride.

## KEEP YOUR BODY CLOCK IN MIND WHEN SETTING YOUR DRIVING SCHEDULE

- Even after a night of 7-8 hours of good sleep, there are periods of the day when we are most likely to feel sleepy—mid-afternoon from 2 pm to 6 pm and from midnight to 6 am.
- Be cautious of scheduling early morning or mid-afternoon meetings that put you on the road during times when you are likely to feel drowsy.
- Avoid scheduling meetings that require travel late into the night. If it is unavoidable, consider staying overnight and driving in the morning.
- When booking flight travel, especially if you will be crossing time zones, think ahead and consider the options for the final leg of your journey—the drive from the airport to home. Consider a plan to use a taxi or car service, have a friend or family member pick you up from the airport, or stay the night near the airport and drive in the morning.



When taking any new medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, read all warnings, talk to your pharmacist, and be mindful of how you feel. Plan to avoid driving until you know how it will affect you.

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