

# Driving while taking opioids

The leaflet aims to inform you of important information needed whilst driving on opioid medication.

## What is an opioid?

Opioids are a group of pain killers which may be used to treat moderate to severe pain. This group of medications is subject to legal control.

## How can opioids affect you?

Opioids can have a range of different effects on patients. It is very common to feel drowsy, lethargic or tired. This can have an effect on your ability to drive or to operate machinery.

## Are there legal repercussions for driving on strong opioids?

Yes. It is illegal in England and Wales to drive with legal drugs in your body if it impairs your ability to drive.

The police can stop you and make you do a 'field impairment assessment' if they think your judgement is impaired.

You should carry evidence (such as your prescription record) to show that you are taking the controlled drug as a medicine prescribed or supplied by a healthcare professional in case you are stopped by the police.

## When can you drive if you have been prescribed opioids?

It is advised to wait at least FIVE days after first taking prescribed opioids before driving again.

When you begin to drive again, it is advised to use roads with which you are familiar and to use the shortest route possible.

You should also assess your ability to drive safely every time you need to drive.

## When should you not drive?

You must NOT drive if:

- You feel drowsy
- If you have taken more than the prescribed dose of opioids
- If you have consumed alcohol
- If you have taken any other medication that can make you drowsy.
- If you have consumed any illicit drugs.

## Is there anything else you need to know?

It may be useful to update the DVLA on your medical condition; however, it is not a legal requirement to inform them.

More information and contact details can be found at: [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)

## Useful sources of information

More information on the drug driving legislation can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law>

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your medications, please contact the Medicines Information team on 020 8725 1033 (Monday to Friday, 11am to 4pm).

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

