

**Directorate
Department of
Palliative Medicine,
Core Clinical**

**Patient Guidance
Medication and driving**

© Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Standing Way, Eaglestone,
Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD
Telephone: 01908 660033

Why this guidance?

The Department for Transport is bringing in a new law from 2nd March 2015 which governs driving while taking certain drugs. This is aimed at improving road safety.

Who does this affect?

The new law applies to **ANYONE** who is driving, attempting to drive or is in charge of a vehicle and has specified drugs over a set limit in their body.

What medications are included in the new law?

- 'Opioid' painkillers: morphine, methadone
- 'Benzodiazepines': diazepam, lorazepam, clonazepam, temazepam, oxazepam, flunitrazepam
- Ketamine
- Amphetamines (methylphenidate)
- These new rules may also include other 'opioid' medications, namely oxycodone and fentanyl.

How will the new law work?

The police have new powers to test and prosecute drivers who are suspected of having taken any of

the specified drugs over a set limit. The law also applies to people who are attempting to drive or are in charge of a vehicle. Police may use a roadside test to assess whether a driver's condition might be due to the presence of drugs. If the test detects any relevant drugs, or the police suspect a driver is under the influence of drugs, the driver may be arrested and taken to the police station for a blood or urine test. This will confirm the type and level of the drugs in the driver's body.

Medical Defence

However, the new offence has a statutory 'medical defence' to protect patients who test positive for any of the specified medications, **so long as** they are taken in accordance with the advice of a healthcare professional or the patient information leaflet that accompanies the medicine and your driving is not impaired. For example, if you are taking morphine for pain and your driving is not impaired and you can provide evidence that you are taking morphine as advised by your healthcare professional, the police will not prosecute you.

What is our advice?

- Keep taking your medications as prescribed
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medication for information on how it may affect your driving ability.
- Carry evidence with you when driving that shows the medication was *either*:

- prescribed or supplied by a healthcare professional to treat a medical problem *OR*
- taken in accordance with the leaflet accompanying the medicine (if bought over-the-counter)
- Suitable evidence could include:
 - a copy of the prescription for the medication;
 - a copy of the specific advice given to you by a healthcare professional showing what the medication is, how much you take (the dose) and when;
 - The patient information leaflet that came with the medicine (if bought 'over the counter').
- If you are unsure and have any questions, talk to the healthcare professional who prescribed your medication or member of the pharmacy team for over the counter medications.

Do NOT drive if:

- You feel that your driving is actually impaired e.g. if you experience sleepiness, dizziness, poor coordination, visual problems, slowed/impaired thinking or confusion.
- This is most likely when:

- you have just started taking a medication listed above;
- The dose of your medication has recently changed;
- You are taking other types of medication that could potentially impair your driving if taken alongside the specified medication.
- You are taking additional doses of the specified medication, for example for breakthrough pain or anxiety;
- You take any amount of alcohol (however small) in addition to these medications.

It will remain an offence to drive while your ability is impaired. It is YOUR responsibility to consider if your driving is, or might be, impaired on any given occasion. If in doubt, don't drive!

For more information, go to www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

Record of advice given by healthcare professional

If they wish to, your healthcare professional may record the advice they have given you in the table below. If you have any questions please speak to the doctor or nurse who prescribed your medication.

Medication	Dose (amount)	Frequency (how often)	Started/ changed on	Healthcare professional (name & designation)

Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Standing Way
Eaglestone
Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD
©Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
www.mkhospital.nhs.uk

We ask information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Author: Dr Ben Dietsch
Reviewed By: Medical team
Willen hospice
Date written: 25.2.2015
Review Date: 25.2.2017
Version No: CANSV/PI/9