



Swansea NHS Trust

Strong Painkillers and Driving

Advice on driving when taking a strong painkiller,

If you are someone who drives, you may be wondering if it is safe for you to drive. Please read this leaflet carefully, the information will help you to decide.

**This advice sheet was written
taking current research and advice
from the DVLA into account**

How painkillers affect people

Strong painkillers affect each person in a different way. Strong painkillers make some people drowsy and reactions can be slower than usual. This may be worse if you take other medicines or tablets that cause drowsiness or if you drink alcohol.

Strong painkillers commonly prescribed by doctors include:

e.g. Oramorph, MST, Oxynorm, Fentanyl, Oxycontin

Advice on driving whilst taking strong painkillers

- You should not drive for 5 days after starting or changing the dose of your strong painkiller. Sometimes longer is needed.
- You must not drive if you feel sleepy.
- You must not drive after drinking alcohol or taking strong drugs which have not been prescribed or recommended by your doctor e.g. cannabis
- You must not drive if you start taking other drugs that cause sleepiness, either prescribed by your doctor or bought from the chemist e.g. hay fever medicine.
- You must not drive on days where you have had to take extra (breakthrough or rescue) doses of strong painkiller e.g. Oramorph

Restarting driving

If after 5 days you are not sleepy, you may start driving.

Make your first trip:

- Short
- On roads that you are familiar with.
- At a time when the traffic is not too busy.

You may find it helpful to have an experienced driver accompanying you to begin with in case you find that you are unable to complete your journey.

Drivers Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

You do not need to inform the DVLA that you are starting a strong painkiller. However there may be other information about your illness that the DVLA needs to know. Your doctors or the DVLA can advise you about this.

How to contact the DVLA

Telephone number for licensing enquiries: 0870 600 0301.

You will need to have your driving licence number available

Website site: www.dvla.gov.uk

Address: Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Agency
(DVLA)
Longview road
Morriston
Swansea
SA99 8QD

Car insurance.

You may need to inform your motor insurance company about your current state of health and what medication you are taking. Each insurance company is different. It is best to discuss your circumstances with your insurance company to be sure that you are covered.

A member of the **Specialist Palliative Care team** of doctors and nurses or your GP will be happy to help you decide when it is safe to drive. If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please don't hesitate to ask a member of the Specialist Palliative Care team