

If you require further advice or  
are not sure then please  
contact your GP or phone 111



Mersey and West Lancashire  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## Strong Painkillers and Driving

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format  
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،  
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie,  
proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil,  
vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe  
de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق  
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

[www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](http://www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)

Author: ED Consultant  
Department: Emergency Department  
Document Number: MWL2033  
Version: 001  
Review Date: 01 / 11 / 2026

## Introduction

You have been prescribed a strong painkiller. They can cause drowsiness and slow down your reactions particularly if you are on other medications.

## The Law

The law changed in March 2015. If you are taking certain drugs (prescription and non prescription) above a specified limit you could be breaking the law.

However if you take your medication as prescribed by the doctor **and** your driving is not affected then you are not breaking the law.

It is your responsibility to know how your medication affects you before you drive.

You also can not drive if you are not fully in control of your car at all times. This would include situations where you are in too much pain to concentrate on the road or you have a splint / plaster in place that inhibits joint movements.

## Informing the DVLA

You do not need to tell the DVLA you are taking a strong pain killer.

There are however many medical conditions that you do need to inform the DVLA about.

Your doctor or the DVLA can give you further advice.

## Insurance

You may need to inform you car insurance company about your health condition and what medication you are taking.

You should discuss this with your insurance company to make sure you are covered.

## Important Points

- If you are taking medications as prescribed and your driving is not affected then you are not breaking the law.
- Take medications as prescribed and if you are concerned speak to your doctor or pharmacist.
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medicine.
- Do not drive until you know how your medication affects you; this may take up to 5 days.
- Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or if your vision is affected.
- If your driving is impaired you are breaking the law even if you have taken as prescribed. Your insurance will also be invalid.