

**7. If you have taken drugs or had a drink – don't drive!**

- ✓ If you know you are going to drink, have a designated driver who stays sober.
- ✓ Use public transportation or call a taxi.
- ✓ Stay where you are until you are sober.
- ✓ Call a friend or family member to come pick you up.



**8. Don't get into a car if the driver has been drinking or taking drugs.**

- ✓ Even small amounts of alcohol or other drugs can affect a person's driving.
- ✓ Try to keep an impaired person from driving – ask a sober person to drive, or take away the keys and call a cab.
- ✓ Don't take a chance – your life and the lives of others are too valuable!

**GET THE FACTS**

# Drinking, Drugs and Driving

## 8 Things Everyone Should Know



Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs puts your life and the lives of others at risk. Get the facts. Drive sober.

For more information about alcohol and other drugs, visit [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov) on the Internet.

This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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**BE SAFE ON THE ROAD**



## DRINKING, DRUGS AND DRIVING: 8 THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Drunk or drugged driving can lead to accidents that hurt or kill people. It can also lead to jail time. Here's what you need to know about drinking, drugs and staying safe on the road.

### 1. Driving takes a clear head.

- ✓ A good driver must make quick decisions and react to changing conditions.

### 2. Alcohol and other drugs affect driving.

- ✓ Alcohol and other drugs can affect reaction time, coordination and judgment.
- ✓ Driving while using *any* substance that affects your ability to think and react is called "impaired driving."
- ✓ Driving can be impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, and even some prescription and over-the-counter medicines.



### 3. Drug combinations can be dangerous.

- ✓ Studies show that when alcohol is used with marijuana or other drugs, impairment is greatly increased.
- ✓ Stimulant drugs (and even energy drinks) can mask the affects of alcohol. This may cause you to think you can drive safely when you cannot.



### 4. Impaired driving has serious consequences.

- ✓ Driving while impaired puts your life and the lives of others at risk.
- ✓ Impaired driving is illegal. You may be fined, lose your driver's license or even be sent to jail.

### 5. Time is the only way to get sober.

- ✓ Strong coffee and cold showers don't reduce blood alcohol content.
- ✓ On the average, it takes about an hour for your body to process most of the alcohol in one standard drink.
- ✓ Some drugs take longer to wear off.

### 6. Alcohol and drugs affect driving in different ways.

**Alcohol, sedatives and painkillers cause a driver to:**

- React too slowly.
- See double or blurred images.
- Not judge distances accurately.

**Stimulant drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines (speed) can cause a driver to:**

- Drive aggressively.
- Have blurred or limited vision.
- Fall asleep at the wheel when the drug wears off.

**Marijuana affects a person's ability to:**

- React to hazards.
- Judge time, speed and distance.
- Concentrate on driving.

**LSD, heroin, ecstasy, mescaline or psilocybin mushrooms may:**

- Make a person see things that are not there.
- Make it hard to concentrate.

**Over-the-counter cold, cough or allergy medicines and even some herbal remedies may:**

- Make a driver sleepy.
- Distort vision and reduce coordination.
- React with other drugs or alcohol to make their effects stronger.