

# PREVENT DROWSY DRIVING

Lack of sleep can make drivers less alert and affect their coordination, judgement, and reaction time. Drowsy driving is dangerous even if the driver doesn't actually fall asleep at the wheel. Driver fatigue can result in cognitive impairment that is similar to drunk driving. Tips to avoid drowsy driving before hitting the road:

- Plan ahead to limit the number of driving hours each day. Break up a long drive into smaller segments and budget time for rest stops.
- Avoid driving when your body is usually sleeping, or you typically have a dip in energy. For most people this will be between midnight and 6am, and in the early afternoon.
- Get plenty of restful sleep. Ideally, for multiple nights in a row before the drive.
- Don't eat a large, heavy meal before driving.
- Avoid alcohol and sedatives.
- If possible, bring a travel companion.

Strategies for reducing fatigue while driving:

- Stay hydrated during the drive and bring healthy snacks.
- Plan rest stops and take frequent breaks. A recommendation is to take a break at least every 2 hours, or every 100 miles.
- Listen to something interesting like a favorite podcast or audiobook.



To prevent drowsy driving, those who drive frequently should focus on their sleep quality.

- Plan off-duty activities to allow enough time for adequate sleep.
- Get enough sleep (7-9 hours per day). If needed, create a better sleeping environment in a dark, quiet, cool room with no electronics.
- If fatigue persists after adequate sleep, get screened for health problems that may be affecting the quality of sleep.

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## Discussion

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***What are the dangerous effects of drowsy driving?***

***What do you do if you start to feel tired while driving?***