

Medications Can Be Wrong Prescription For Safety

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Your shift finally over, you stumble out the door on the way to your car. It's dark and rainy and you are coming down with a cold. You can't imagine how your day could get much worse.

It could get a lot worse if your ability to drive or work safely is impaired by illness, fatigue or by a medication such as a cold remedy.

Many people don't realize some common drugs such as those used to suppress coughs, counteract allergies, clear up stuffy noses and calm quaking nerves can also cause dangerous drowsiness.

These medications, many of which are sold without a prescription, can make it unsafe for you to operate a motor vehicle or workplace injury before you realize you cannot think or react as fast as usual.

Here are some of the medications that can cause impairment of your mental and physical abilities:

- Antihistamines
- Decongestants

- Cough syrups which may contain a narcotic or alcohol
- Painkillers
- Prescription narcotics such as OxyContin
- Tranquilizers
- Sedatives
- Sleeping pills and bedtime cold remedies that can have a hangover effect the next day.

How you can counter the effects of these medications:

■ Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the effects of prescription drugs you will be taking. You may be able to find an alternative remedy that will allow you to remain alert for work and driving.

■ Read the label and the fine-print paper enclosed with the medication. If you have more questions, search the Internet for information about the drug and its less common reactions.

■ Be aware of the possibilities of

drowsiness, slow reflexes and impaired judgment when you take a remedy. Make arrangements to avoid driving and operating machinery until you are sure you will not be affected.

■ Be ready for effects to be more pronounced when you first begin taking the drug. For instance, antidepressants can cause sleepiness for a new user who later adjusts to the chemical change. Try your first doses in a safe environment.

Your ability to drive and work safely can be impaired not only by alcohol or illegal drugs, but also by prescription and over the counter medicines. These effects may be more severe if you are tired or ill – conditions which, on their own, also can cause impairment. ■

Safety Tip:

**Be careful when
taking medicine.
Know how it will
affect you before
you drive or work.
It could prevent
you from being
involved in a
serious accident.**



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