



Department
for Transport

THINK

NEW DRUG DRIVING RULES

Advice for those prescribed Sativex



**Certain medicines may
affect your ability to drive**

From 2 March 2015 there will be a new law on driving after taking certain drugs (including some medicines) **in England and Wales.**



This law states that it is an offence to drive with certain drugs above specified blood levels in the body, whether your driving is impaired or not. This will make it easier for the police to tackle drug drivers.

The new law sets limits at very low levels for **eight drugs commonly associated with illegal drug use**, such as cannabis and cocaine, to tackle illegal drug use and driving.

The law also includes **eight drugs commonly associated with medicinal use, that are sometimes abused**, that have been set at higher limits based on the available evidence of the road safety risk and to reflect their use as medicines.

The majority of patients that are fit to drive and are taking medicines as directed are unlikely to be above the specified limit and therefore would not be committing the new offence.

Even if you are above the specified limit but your driving is not impaired and you are taking your medicine in accordance with the advice of a healthcare professional and/or as printed in the accompanying leaflet you will also be within the law.

Prescribed Sativex

The Government has carefully considered Sativex, as it is a cannabis plant based drug that has a licence for medical use in the UK where it is prescribed for the treatment of spasticity in multiple sclerosis (MS).



For the purposes of roadside screening tests, the police would not be able to distinguish using a preliminary saliva test between a driver taking cannabis and a driver taking Sativex. Therefore patients treated with Sativex are likely to give a positive preliminary saliva result and might subsequently be over the specified blood limit. **However, if you are an MS sufferer who in the opinion of a doctor is able to drive safely you should not be deterred from either taking your medicine or from driving. In these circumstances there is a statutory medical defence that can be raised for the new drug driving offence.**

Certain medicines may affect your ability to drive and it will remain an offence to drive while your ability is impaired by drugs as there is no defence of being impaired to drive. You should also always continue to take your medicine in accordance with the advice of a healthcare professional and/or as printed in the accompanying leaflet but if in doubt about whether you are impaired you should not drive.

What will happen if I'm stopped by the police?

The 'medical defence' can be raised for the new offence if drivers are taking medication as directed and found to be over the limit and not impaired. Drivers taking relevant medicines may choose to have evidence with them when driving to indicate that they have been legitimately supplied and minimise inconvenience. The medical defence states that you are not guilty if:

- the medicine was prescribed, supplied, or sold to you to treat a medical or dental problem, and
- you took the medicine according to the instructions given by the prescriber, a pharmacist or a member of the pharmacy team or the information provided with the medicine.

MS is a medical condition that must be notified to the DVLA. If your doctor provides an opinion to the DVLA that you are safe to drive then the DVLA would notify you that a short-term driving licence will be issued for up to three years. The notification letter sent by the DVLA will also provide advice on the new drug driving offence and the medical defence.

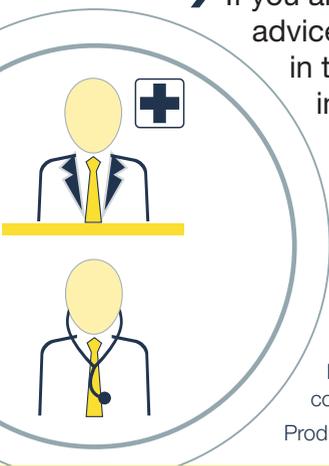
This letter could be kept with you as evidence, along with your prescription, counterfoil or any letter, report or advice from a healthcare professional so that you can raise the medical defence at the earliest opportunity and reduce any inconvenience.



If the police are satisfied that you are taking your medication under the supervision and/or advice of a healthcare professional (such as the prescriber, your doctor or pharmacist) and your driving is not impaired, they can allow you to proceed.

What should I do if I need to take any of the specified medicines?

- Keep taking your medicines as prescribed.
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medicines for information on how your medicines may affect your driving ability.
- Do not drive after taking your medicines until you know how they affect you.
- Do not drive if you feel drowsy, dizzy, unable to concentrate or make decisions, or if you have blurred or double vision.
- If you are taking your medicine in accordance with the advice of a healthcare professional and/or as printed in the accompanying leaflet and your driving is not impaired, then you are not breaking the law.



If you are unsure how the change will affect you, talk to your doctor or a member of the pharmacy team.

For more information go to
www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

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