

## More Information

New York State Department of Health  
[www.health.ny.gov/DontDriveDrowsy](http://www.health.ny.gov/DontDriveDrowsy)

National Sleep Foundation  
[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)  
[www.drowsydriving.org](http://www.drowsydriving.org)

New York State Governor's Traffic Safety  
Committee  
[www.safeny.ny.gov](http://www.safeny.ny.gov)

National Center on Sleep Disorders  
Research  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/org/ncsdr](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/org/ncsdr)

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety  
[www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)

National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration  
[www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov)

National Road Safety Foundation  
[www.nationalroadsafety.org](http://www.nationalroadsafety.org)

Stay Awake! Stay Alive!

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Department  
of Health

# Stay Awake! Stay Alive!

## Don't Drive Drowsy

Have you ever yawned repeatedly, felt tired, or caught yourself nodding off while driving?

If so, you were driving drowsy.

Drowsy driving can be just as deadly as **drunk, drugged, or distracted driving.**



Drowsy driving results from feeling tired or lack of sleep when you are behind the wheel. When you are drowsy, reaction time slows, judgment is impaired, and the risk of a crash increases. Even if you fall asleep for less than a second, you risk losing control of your vehicle. When you are drowsy, ask someone else to drive, or change your plans. You should get some sleep before getting behind the wheel.

## Who's at risk?

Anyone who is tired is at risk, but the following groups have a higher risk of driving drowsy:



Commercial drivers, including tractor trailer, tour bus, and public transit drivers



People who work long hours or late night shifts



People with sleep disorders



New parents or caregivers of babies and young children



High school and college students, young or newer drivers

## Know the signs of drowsy driving

- Yawning repeatedly
- Struggling to keep your eyes open or focused
- Forgetting the last few miles driven
- Tailgating or missing traffic signals
- Swerving or drifting between lanes of traffic

If you are driving drowsy, pull over into a well-lit area and take a 20-minute nap, or switch with another driver.

## Stay alert behind the wheel

- Get enough sleep before you drive, especially when going on long trips.
- Make regular stops or switch drivers every 100 miles or 2 hours.
- Drivers are most likely to feel drowsy between 1pm-4pm and 2am-6am. If possible, avoid driving during these times.

- Don't count on caffeine. It can provide a short fix or 'pick me up.' But be aware, it takes 30 minutes before you feel the effect and it can wear off quickly.
- Avoid prescription and over-the-counter medicines that could make you drowsy.
- Never drink alcohol. It slows down your reflexes and causes drowsiness.

Opening the windows, turning up the radio, or turning on the air conditioner **will not** help you stay awake while driving.

## Get better sleep

- Make it a priority to get at least 7 hours of sleep daily. Teens require up to 10 hours.
- Keep the sleeping area dark.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol before you go to sleep.
- Set a routine for bed time—listen to relaxing music, read, or take a warm bath or shower before you go to sleep.

- Clear your mind. Make a list of your thoughts or concerns before you go to sleep so you do not forget them.
- Lower the thermostat to 60-65°F before going to sleep.
- Use the "Do Not Disturb" sign if you are staying in a hotel or motel.
- Turn off or unplug cellphones and electronic devices where you sleep.
- Use a fan or wear earplugs to block outside sounds.
- Pay attention to side effects of medicines and adjust the time you take them, as they might interrupt your sleep.

Get the extra sleep you need before you get behind the wheel, especially after international travel, daylight savings time, and travelling in different time zones.