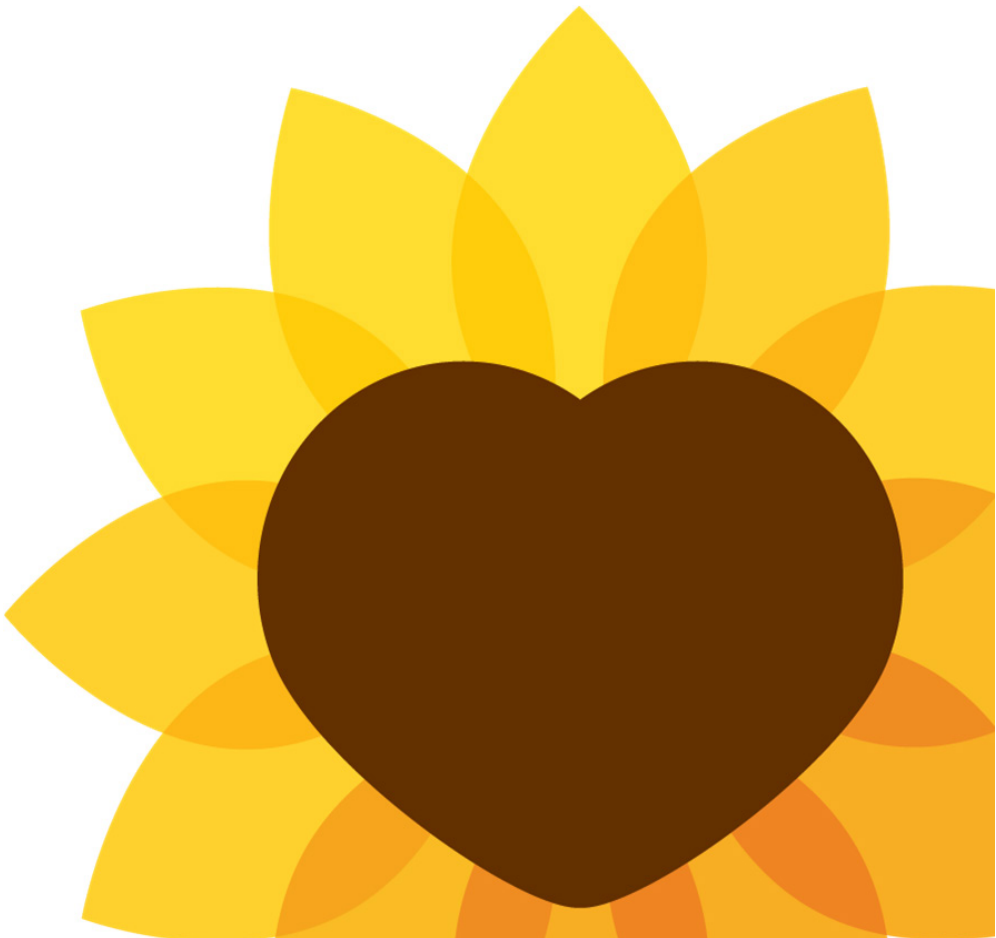


East Cheshire
Hospice

Driving & Strong Painkilling Drugs

Information for patients and those
important to them



The medicines you are taking do not automatically disqualify you from driving in the United Kingdom, you are not breaking the law if you are taking the painkillers as they have been prescribed and are driving safely. However, it is illegal to drive if medicines are reducing the speed of your reactions or general alertness. Both the label on your medication and the medication's Patient Information Leaflet will warn you about possible drowsiness. Strong pain killers affect each person in different ways. It is important to take the following precautions:

When not to drive

- You should not drive unless you feel 100% safe to do so. It is your responsibility to consider if your driving is or might be impaired on any given occasion.
- You should not drive if you feel drowsy or dizzy, or your thinking reactions, co-ordination or eyesight are impaired
- You should not drive for 5 days after starting or changing the dose of your strong painkiller. Sometimes longer is needed.
- You must not drive on days where you have had to take extra (breakthrough or rescue) doses of strong painkiller, e.g. Oramorph, Oxynorm.
- You should not drive after taking any amount of alcohol (however small) in addition to your medications
- You must not drive if you start taking other drugs that can cause sleepiness, either prescribed by your doctor, bought over the counter e.g. hay fever medications or drugs not prescribed by a doctor e.g. cannabis.
- Other factors that can impair driving performance must also be taken into consideration, e.g. pain, insomnia, anxiety, frailty and visual disturbance.

Restarting Driving

You may try driving when you feel 100% safe to do so and you no longer feel drowsy. Keep your first trip short, on roads you are used to and at a time when the traffic is not too busy. It is sensible to make this journey during daylight and when there is good visibility. It may help to have an experienced driver with you to begin with in case you cannot finish your journey.

Who to inform if you are planning to drive

- A member of the Specialist Palliative Care team or your doctor can advise you further

- Your car insurance company. Each insurance company is different, so it is best to discuss your circumstances with yours to be sure you are covered.
- You do not automatically have to inform the DVLA that you are taking strong painkillers but there may be other information about your illness that the DVLA needs to know. You will need to know your driving license number when you contact them.

Contacting the DVLA by phone

DVLA drivers' medical enquiries

Telephone: 0300 790 6806

Monday to Friday, 8am to 5:30pm

Saturday, 8am to 1pm

By email

You can email DVLA to tell them about your driving and medical issues via the DVLA website

www.dvla.gov.uk

By post

Drivers' Medical Enquiries

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1TU

Be prepared

When driving carry evidence with you to confirm that they have been prescribed for you e.g. a copy of your repeat prescription and/or the original box/packaging, so that police can verify your prescription.

Sources of information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drug-driving-and-medicine-advice-for-healthcare-professionals>

Analgesic drugs and fitness to drive. Palliative Care Formulary 6th Edition palliativedrugs.com 2014

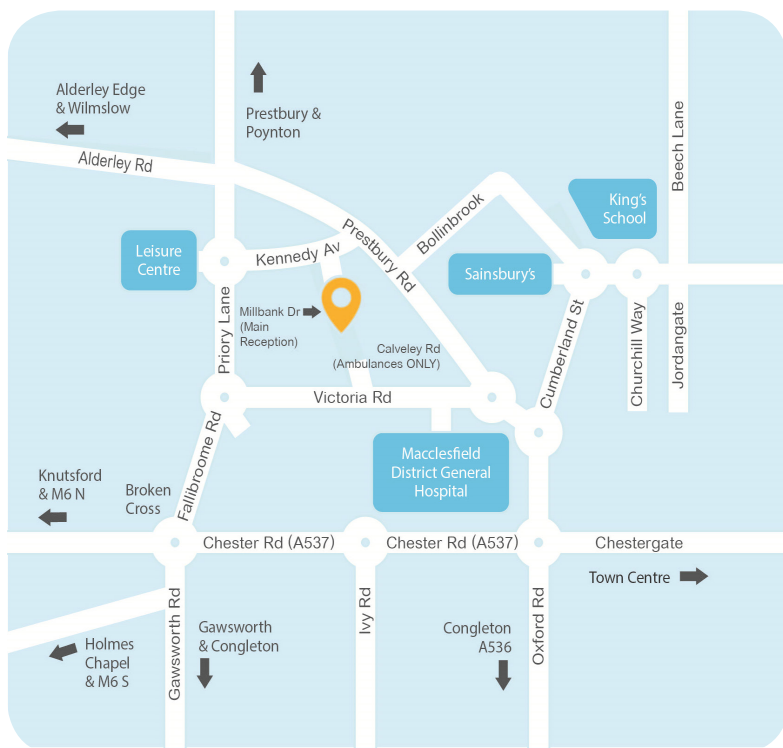
https://www.thh.nhs.uk/documents/_Patients/PatientLeaflets/palliativecare/PIID372_Driving_while_taking_strong_opioids.pdf

If you plan to drive abroad, find out what the laws are in that area before embarking on your trip.



East Cheshire Hospice

Where people come to live



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