



# Stress and Sleep

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## DRIVING UNDER STRESS

Any stressful situation can affect your driving. Even mild emotional feelings can affect your driving ability. Emotions are hard to control and they can make you temporarily accident prone.



Driving in traffic routinely involves events and incidents. Events are normal sequential maneuvers such as stopping for the light, changing lanes, or putting on the brakes. Incidents are frequent but unpredictable events.



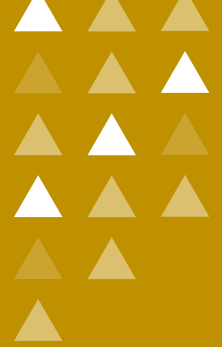
Driving is a highly dramatic activity that millions of people perform routinely on a daily basis. The drama stems from high risk and unpredictability. Driving has two structural components that conflict with each other – predictability and unpredictability. Both are present all of the time.



Predictability, like maintaining steady speed in one's lane, creates safety, security, and escape from disaster.

Unpredictability, like impulsive lane changes without signaling, creates danger, stress, and crashes.





**If you are worried, nervous, angry, frustrated, or depressed, let someone else drive.**

You may become impulsive and aggressive and take risks you normally wouldn't. You should avoid driving when you are not emotionally prepared to handle the additional stress that driving can cause.



## DRIVER FATIGUE

Driver fatigue can kill. It slows your reaction time and affects your concentration and attention. Drivers should not push themselves to the point of not being physically and mentally alert at all times.





Young males between the ages of 16 and 29 seem to be more at risk of drowsy driving.

Individuals that work shift work and have their sleep patterns disrupted also face higher risks for drowsy driving.





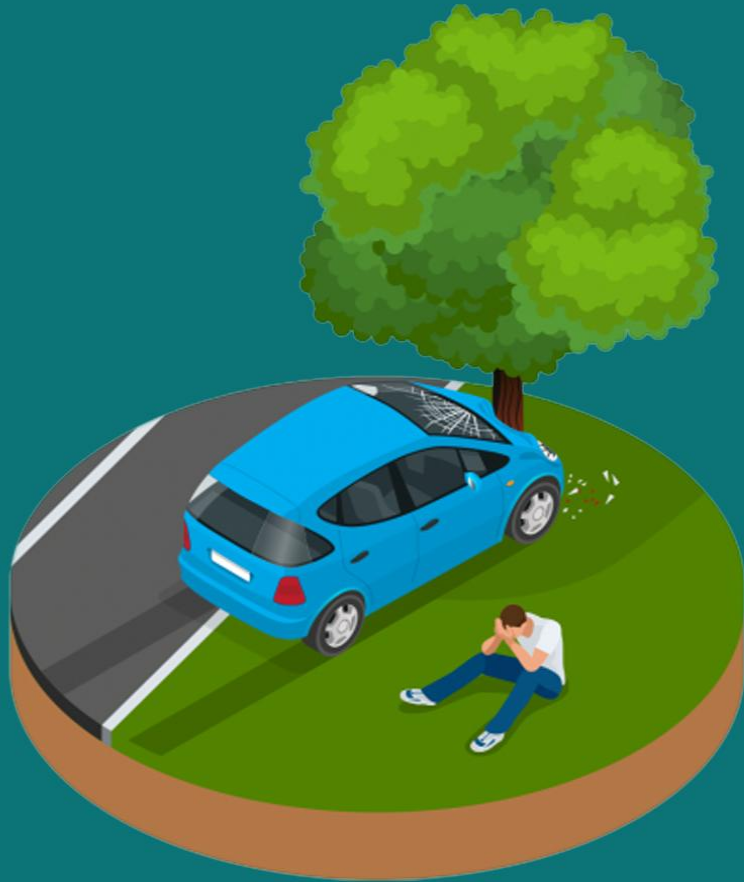
## WARNING SIGNS OF DROWSY DRIVING

- Inability to recall the last few miles traveled
- Having difficulty focusing or keeping your eyes open
- Drifting from the lane in which you are driving



- Having disconnected or wandering thoughts
- Feeling as though your head is very heavy (nodding)
- Missing traffic signs
- Yawning repeatedly
- Tailgating other vehicles





The National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration suggests there may be some common factors involved in drowsy driving crashes.

- The crash occurs late at night or early in the morning.
- The crash is likely to be serious.
- The crash involves a single vehicle which leaves the roadway.





- The crash occurs on a high-speed road.
- The driver does not attempt to avoid the crash.
- The driver is alone in the vehicle.

