

TALLAHASSEE PULMONARY CLINIC

Pulmonary Medicine-Critical Care Medicine-Sleep Medicine

Drowsy Driving Tips

These suggestions will help prevent you from the risk of drowsy driving.

1. **If you feel tired or drowsy don't drive.** Sleepiness is a major cause of motor vehicle accidents and accounts for 40% of all fatal crashes reported on the New York State Thruway. No matter how much you think you can control sleepiness, you can't.
2. **If you get sleepy driving, stop and rest.** Drink coffee, walk around, or take a brief nap in your car if you are sleepy. Have a 10-15 minute break after every 2 hours of driving.
3. **Make sure that you follow your doctor's advice** about the treatment of your sleep disorder. For example, if you have sleep apnea and use CPAP, make sure you use it the whole night before your trip. CPAP needs to be used 6 hours or more every night in order to have the full benefit.
4. **Get a good night's sleep** before driving. Do not cut yourself short of sleep if you plan a long drive the next day. Get to bed early and do not stay up late packing.
5. **Avoid alcohol** both the night before your trip and during the trip. Alcohol will disrupt sleep and make you more tired the next day. Sleepiness and alcohol are additive in impairing your driving ability.
6. **Avoid any sedative medications and narcotics** before driving. This includes sedating antihistamines (Tylenol PM, Sominex, Benadryl, Hydroxyzine, Zyrtec, Doxepin) that are often contained in cold or allergy medications. Do not take any of these sedating medications the night before you drive as they may have long lasting effects the next day.
7. **Travel during non-sleeping hours.** Accidents due to sleepiness are more common during the nighttime hours.
8. **Drive with a companion.** Share the driving. Relax in the back seat until it is your time to drive again.