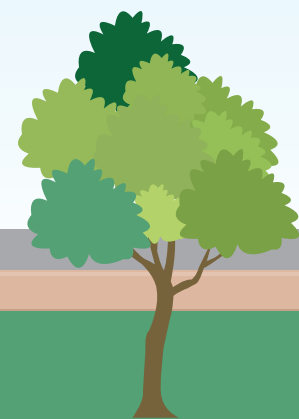
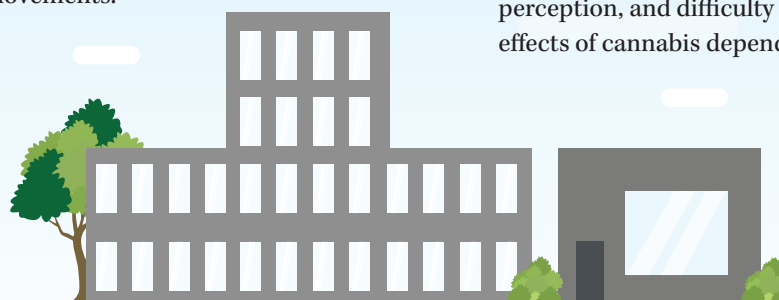


The Truth Youth and Drug-Impaired Driving



Background

Some drugs, including cannabis, can impair your ability to drive and increase the risk of collisions. In Canada, the number of drivers killed in motor vehicle crashes who test positive for drugs exceeds the number of drivers who test positive for alcohol. Young people continue to be the largest group of drivers who die in crashes and later test positive for alcohol and/or drugs.

Did you know that impaired driving is a leading criminal cause of death and injury in Canada?

This resource provides information about the effects of drugs on a person's ability to drive. Have the conversation with young people and support them in making informed decisions about their driving behaviour.

Drug-Impaired Driving

Drugs (legal, illegal or prescription) can affect us in many ways. Even small amounts can increase your chances of being involved in a motor vehicle collision. Different drugs have different effects on

your brain and body, and can impair the ability to drive by:

- Slowing or increasing reaction time
- Increasing sleepiness
- Reducing the ability to handle unexpected events
- Impairing short-term memory
- Impairing concentration
- Reducing the ability to divide attention
- Causing a poor time and space perception
- Impairing judgment and decision-making
- Increasing risk-taking behaviour
- Impairing balance and coordination

Here are seven categories of drugs which can impair drivers and some of their potential effects:

Central nervous system depressants

e.g., Xanax, Ativan, Effexor, Paxil, Valium

Central nervous system depressants slow down brain activity, cause drowsiness and can cause slurred speech. They can also cause slow uncoordinated movements.

Hallucinogens

e.g., LSD, ecstasy, mescaline, psilocybin

Hallucinogens can distort sensory messages to the brain—they can alter taste, sight, hearing, smell and feeling. These drugs can impair decision-making, memory, perception and the ability to control speed and adapt to change.

Central nervous system stimulants

e.g., cocaine, meth, crystal meth, speed, Ritalin

Stimulants accelerate and excite the brain and the body. This may result in the inability to focus and divide attention, and an increase in risk-taking.

Narcotic analgesics

e.g., oxycodone, fentanyl, heroin, methadone, codeine

A driver under the effects of narcotic analgesics may be drowsy, drive slower, have pinpoint pupils, breathe slowly, weave in and out of lanes, have poor vehicle control and delayed reaction times.

Cannabis/Marijuana

e.g., hashish, cannabis oil, hash oil, shatter, budder, wax, dabs, kief, edibles, tinctures, creams, pot

Cannabis use affects cognitive and motor abilities. This can result in a reduced ability to divide attention, fatigue, stress, poor time and space perception, and difficulty concentrating. The effects of cannabis depend on several factors, such

as the type of cannabis used, how the cannabis is ingested and how much a person takes.

Dissociative anesthetics

e.g., PCP, ketamine, dextromethorphan (DXM)

Dissociative anesthetics can cause cyclic unresponsive behaviours, hallucinations and an increased body temperature.

Inhalants

e.g., gasoline, whippits, computer air duster, nitrous oxide, other volatile solvents

Inhalants can cause bloodshot eyes, severe confusion, flushed face, extremely poor coordination and severe intoxication. With prolonged use, they can also cause permanent brain damage.

Impaired Driving and the Law

Impaired driving, whether caused by drugs (even if prescribed by a doctor), alcohol or a combination of both, is illegal and can result in a criminal offence under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. It's illegal to operate any type of motor vehicles while impaired, including cars, boats, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), snowmobiles, and scooters (gas or electric).

Police officers are trained to detect drug-impaired driving using roadside Standard Field Sobriety

Testing (SFST) and Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) evaluations. They can also demand a sample of blood, urine, or oral fluid to test for the presence of impairing substances.

In addition to criminal penalties, many provinces and territories impose administrative sanctions for impaired driving. These may include fines, licence suspensions, and education or diversion programs. Check your provincial or territorial laws for information on the consequences of impaired driving in your area.

Prevention

To help young people make informed choices and reduce the risks associated with drug-impaired driving:

- Be a positive role model;
- Know the facts! Young people are doing their own research, especially online—not all of what they find is true;
- Talk with youth openly and honestly about the harms, consequences and dangers of drug-impaired driving;

- Provide youth with alternatives to driving impaired or getting in the car with someone who is. For example:

- » Designate a driver;
- » Use alternative modes of transportation (public transportation, taxi, friend or family member);
- » Stay the night if possible and safe to do so.

- Actively encourage youth to drive sober and to make healthy life choices that will enable them to reach their personal goals.

For More Information

RCMP Centre for Youth Crime Prevention
rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cycp-cpcj

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
ccsa.ca

Government of Canada
canada.ca/cannabis

In collaboration with:

