



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien de lutte
contre les toxicomanies

Partnership. Knowledge. Change.
Collaboration. Connaissance. Changement.



Drug-Impaired Driving in Canada Educator Toolkit

Key Messages about Drug-Impaired Driving

- Many types of illegal and prescription drugs can impair a person's ability to drive. The effects of drugs on driving can include reduced ability to divide attention, poor time and space management, and reduced ability to allocate concentration.
- The effects of drugs on driving can increase the crash risk by up to eight times. Such crashes sometimes result in death.
- More young people are driving after using cannabis than after drinking.
- While youth understand that driving under the influence of alcohol is risky, many youth do not consider driving while impaired by drugs, such as marijuana, to be risky.
- Some youth even believe that using cannabis makes them better drivers, but evidence clearly shows that it impairs driving ability. These misperceptions can result in driving decisions that put the health and safety of young drivers at risk.
- It is illegal to drive while impaired by drugs or alcohol. Police officers trained and certified as Drug Recognition Evaluators (DREs) can detect drug impaired drivers. DREs evaluate a driver's behaviour for impairment and can request a blood, urine or oral fluid sample for testing.
- Drug-impaired driving carries the same criminal offence and charges as alcohol-impaired driving, even if the drug has been prescribed by a doctor:
 - First offence: \$1,000 fine, 12-month licence suspension and a possible jail sentence of up to 18 months
 - Second offence: minimum 30 days in jail and a two-year licence suspension
 - Third or subsequent offence: minimum of 120 days in prison, three-year driving prohibition
 - Causing bodily harm or death while driving impaired: maximum 10-years in prison or life sentence

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The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse changes lives by bringing people and knowledge together to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs on society. We partner with public, private and non-governmental organizations to improve the health and safety of Canadians.

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