

Drowsy Driving Facts

There's no denying that driving can be dangerous, especially when you or the drivers around you aren't practicing safe driving. Motor vehicle accidents are responsible for thousands of fatalities and injuries annually, and in almost every case, human error is to blame. **Drowsy driving** is especially dangerous, and deadly. Consider these facts that illustrate how dangerous it can be to drive every day.

- Each year, approximately 32,719 people die in motor vehicle crashes.
- 90 people die in motor vehicle crashes daily.
- Human error is responsible for 94% of all crashes. Recognition errors, including inattention, cause the most accidents at 41%.
- **Drowsy driving** is involved in 2.2 to 2.6% of total fatal crashes annually.
- **Driver fatigue** is believed to cause 100,000 police-reported crashes annually with 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses.

Nodding off at the wheel or slogging through traffic while you're sleepy isn't a minor annoyance: it's dangerous and potentially deadly. See how fatal and disturbingly common — drowsy driving is in these statistics.

- An estimated 30,000 injury crashes with reports of drowsy drivers occur yearly.
- Sleep-related crashes are most common among young drivers. Men, adults with children, and shift workers are particularly at risk.
- Sleeping for six to seven hours a night makes you twice as likely to be involved in a sleep-related crash. Sleeping less than five hours increases your risk by four to five times.
- **Being awake for 18 hours results in an impairment equal to a blood alcohol concentration of .05.** At 24 hours, the impairment reaches the .10 blood alcohol concentration level, higher than .08, which is considered legally drunk.
- Drowsy drivers are often more stressed, impatient, and tend to drive faster.
- 37% of drivers report that they've fallen asleep behind the wheel in their lifetime.
- 28.3% of licensed drivers report that they've had a hard time keeping their eyes open while driving within the last month.
- Only one in five drivers pulls over to nap when driving drowsy.

How Much Sleep Do You Really Need?

Sleep is essential to feeling rested and alert. Getting the right amount for your mind and body feels great and helps you wake up feeling refreshed and ready to go. Every person is different when it comes to the exact amount of sleep that's optimal for them, but most people fall within a range, depending on their age. There is no precise number of minutes or hours of sleep at night that guarantees you will wake up feeling totally refreshed. But based on your age and lifestyle, what's recommended for you is likely falls within a certain range.

Adults: Between the ages of 18 and 64, adults should aim for seven to nine hours of nightly sleep. If you're older than 65, you may need a little less: seven to eight hours is recommended.

Easy Ways to Get More Sleep

If getting enough sleep seems like an uphill battle, there are a few tips you can try. To start, head to bed at the same time every night, to allow your body to settle into a regular sleep-wake schedule. Put parameters on your screen time—shut off your computer and put down your smartphone at least an hour before bed and keep them outside of your bedroom if possible. Also, while watching TV before bed may seem relaxing, it can actually be too stimulating.

To help get quality sleep, avoid alcohol, caffeine, and spicy and fried foods right before bedtime. Aim for a bedroom temperature between 60 and 67 °F, make sure it's dark, and block any bothersome noises with a pair of earplugs.

Signs You're Not Getting Enough Sleep

If you're sleeping less than what your body needs, you may experience symptoms in addition to feeling tired, such as:

- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty with memory
- Puffy eyes, bags, or dark circles under eyes
- Feeling hungrier or gaining weight
- Irritability or moodiness
- Depression
- Increased bouts with illness