



# National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

## What is Driving Impaired?

Driving impaired means operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of substances that affect a person's ability to drive safely, such as alcohol, drugs or even certain medications. It is both illegal and dangerous to drive under the influence of alcohol or other substances, as it puts the driver, passengers and others on the road at significant risk.

## Dangers of Driving Impaired

Driving impaired is dangerous because alcohol and drugs can impair judgment, slow reaction times and reduce coordination, making it more difficult to respond quickly to hazards on the road. Impaired drivers may struggle to maintain control of their vehicle, misjudge distances or fail to notice important signs and signals. This puts everyone at risk: the driver, the passengers, pedestrians and other drivers on the road.

Impaired driving is the leading cause of traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities. The consequences of driving impaired can be life-altering, emphasizing the importance of never driving under the influence.

## Driving Impaired Statistics

The CDC reports that **30% of traffic-related deaths** in the United States are because of alcohol-impaired drivers.

**32 people in the United States** are killed every day in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver—this is one death every 45 minutes.

Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) indicated that the estimated number of U.S. residents ages 16 years and older who drove under the influence in the past year was:

**18.5 million**  
for alcohol

**11.7 million**  
for marijuana

**2.4 million**  
for illicit drugs other  
than marijuana

## Driving Under the influence of Marijuana

In the United States, it is illegal to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of marijuana. Research shows that marijuana slows your reaction time and ability to make decisions, impairs coordination and distorts perception. After alcohol, marijuana is the substance most often associated with impaired driving.

### Plan Ahead

If you are planning to drink alcohol or use drugs, plan a ride home ahead of time.

- 1. Get a ride home.** Utilize ride-sharing apps or coordinate with a friend or family member to get home safely.
- 2. Agree on a trusted designated driver ahead of time.** If you are in a group, agree on one individual who will not drink or use drugs.
- 3. Be aware of over-the-counter and prescription medications.** Many over the counter medications can impact your ability to drive safely, whether on their own or mixed with alcohol.



**DART Prevention Coalition**  
Taking Aim at Substance Use in Ocean County

**RWJBarnabas**  
**HEALTH**

**Institute for  
Prevention  
and Recovery**