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Drowsy Drivers Kill

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that drowsy driving results in 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and more than 100,000 accidents each year. Sleepiness impairs drivers by slowing reaction times, impairing vision, and causing lapses in judgment.1 One of every six deadly crashes and one in eight crashes resulting in serious injury include drowsy drivers.2 Yet, two of every five drivers surveyed admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel.3

Being aware of the following signs of drowsy driving is the first step:

=> Difficulty keeping your eyes open and focused, and/or heavy eyelids

=> Difficulty keeping your head up

=> Drifting from your lane, swerving, tailgating and/or hitting rumble strips

=> Inability to clearly remember the last few miles driven

=> Missing traffic signs or driving past your exit

=> Yawning repeatedly and rubbing your eyes

=> Feeling irritable or restless

If you do feel drowsy, remember the following AAA safety tips:

=> Stop driving if you become sleepy

=> Travel at times when you are normally awake

=> Stay overnight instead of driving straight through to your destination

=> Take a break every two hours or 100 miles

=> Drink a caffeinated beverage 30 minutes before driving to allow it to take effect

=> Travel with an awake passenger

Lastly, you can adopt the following good sleeping habits to prevent drowsy driving:

=> Try to go to sleep at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning

=> Try not to take naps during the day, because naps may make you less sleepy at night

=> Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol late in the day

=> Get regular exercise but not within three hours of going to sleep

=> Don't eat a heavy meal late in the day. A light snack before bedtime may help you sleep

=> Make your sleeping place comfortable. Be sure that it is dark, quiet, and not too warm or too cold

=> Follow a routine to help relax and wind down before sleep, such as taking a bath

=> If you tend to lie awake worrying about things, try making a to-do list before you go to bed

=> See your healthcare provider if you think that you have insomnia or another sleep disorder

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