**Is Drugged Driving As Bad As Drunk Driving?**

For as long as I can remember, I have heard about drunk driving and how terrible and dangerous it is. But what about drugged driving? Is drugged driving as bad as drunk driving?

I have met many people who are under the impression that driving while under the influence of certain drugs is somehow less dangerous than driving while drunk. This is just not true.

**Why You Shouldn’t Drink and Drive**

We all know you shouldn’t drink and drive. According to the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/impaired-drv_factsheet.html) (CDC), 29 people in the United States die every day from motor vehicle crashes that involve a driver who is under the influence of some amount of alcohol.

Alcohol is known to reduce a person’s brain function. After a person has even just one drink, their inhibitions are lowered, their reflexes are slower, and their decision-making skills are worsened. Alcohol also makes it difficult for your brain to process information. So when you’re driving down the street, and someone else makes a poor driving decision, you might typically be able to get out of their way and make sure an accident doesn’t happen. If you are under the influence of alcohol (or any substance), it’s much less likely that your brain will be able to process the information on time.

**Is Drugged Driving Safer Than Drunk Driving?**

In short, no! Driving under the influence of any kind of substance is dangerous and can lead to horrible accidents. Per the CDC, drugs other than alcohol are involved in about 16% of motor vehicle crashes. According to the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 12.6 million people above the age of 16 drove while under the influence of illicit drugs in the year 2018 alone. There’s no question that drugged driving is a severe problem.

**Why Is It So Dangerous To Drive While Under the Influence of Drugs?**

Most, if not all, drugs impair a person’s judgment and ability to operate a vehicle safely.

Marijuana, for example, is known to affect a person’s judgment, ability to concentrate, and hand-eye coordination. Additionally, marijuana often makes it difficult for people to react to their surroundings promptly. When you’re driving a car, these things are critical! Drugged driving is just as bad as drunk driving.

It’s also extremely dangerous to drive while using opiates. Many opiate users will ‘nod out’ after they take them. When a person nods out, they are basically losing consciousness briefly. It’s like a person who falls asleep sitting up. Nodding out can happen many, many times after a person has used opiates. This makes driving under the influence of any kind of opiate incredibly dangerous.

Researchers have spent a lot more time studying drunk driving statistics than the consequences of drugged driving,so the data is still a bit limited. It’s safe to say, though, that you should not take any mind-altering substance before or while driving.

**What About Driving While Under The Influence of Stimulants?**

I’ve also heard people talk about driving while under the influence of stimulants and how they think they can do it safely. Stimulants certainly won’t make you tired and groggy like alcohol or marijuana will, but you still can’t drive safely if you have taken a stimulant, such as Adderall, cocaine, or methamphetamine.

Stimulants often provide the user with a false sense of security; they feel like their reflexes and decision-making skills are heightened, but this generally isn’t the case. Stimulant use can lead to increased eye movements and attention deficits, which can make it harder to focus on driving. If you are under the influence of a stimulant, it’s difficult to fully pay attention to driving safely and watching the other cars on the road.

**Don’t Drink Or Drug And Drive! It’s Not Worth It**

It’s never worth it to drive under the influence of anything. Even if you’ve only had a couple of drinks or only smoke a little bit of marijuana, you will be impaired. If you know that you will be drinking or using drugs, find another way to get to your destination and home. Take an Uber, get a taxi, or make sure you have a designated driver.

Driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol has serious consequences. You can kill people, kill yourself, or end up in jail. While these are worst-case scenarios, they happen to people every single day. Even having one drink or a small amount of drugs will impair your ability to operate a vehicle safely. It’s just not worth it.

**Get Help If You Need It!**

If you are struggling with getting your drinking or drug use under control, contact a professional immediately!