

Drowsy Driving Quiz

Are you at risk for falling asleep behind the wheel? Take this simple quiz and find out. Just circle “True” or “False” for each of the following statements, and check your answers on the second page:

1. There is no relationship between one’s sleep and work schedule and risk of being involved in a drowsy-driving crash. (**True** or **False**)
2. Working the night shift does not affect one’s chances of being involved in a sleep-related crash. (**True** or **False**)
3. The largest at-risk group for sleep-related crashes is commercial drivers. (**True** or **False**)
4. Overall, sleep-related crashes have certain characteristics that set them apart from other types of crashes. (**True** or **False**)
5. People with a sleep and breathing disorder called obstructive sleep apnea have about the same risk as the rest of the general population of being involved in a drowsy-driving crash. (**True** or **False**)
6. Eating a big lunch tends to make everyone sleep. (**True** or **False**)
7. People can usually tell when they are going to fall asleep. (**True** or **False**)
8. Drivers in drowsy-driving crashes are more likely to report sleep problems. (**True** or **False**)
9. Rolling down a window or singing along with the radio while driving will help keep someone awake. (**True** or **False**)
10. Wandering, disconnected thoughts are a warning sign of driver fatigue. (**True** or **False**)
11. You can stockpile sleep on the weekends to avoid being sleepy during the week. (**True** or **False**)
12. I’m a safe driver so it doesn’t matter if I’m sleepy. (**True** or **False**)

Answers

1. **FALSE.** Studies have found a direct correlation between the numbers of hours a person works and their risk of being in a drowsy driving crash. People who work more than one job where their primary job involves an atypical schedule are twice as likely to be involved in a sleep-related crash when compared to people in non-sleep related crashes.
2. **FALSE.** According to a study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, working the night shift increases a person's risk of being involved in drowsy driving crash by nearly six times.
3. **FALSE.** Sleep-related crashes are most common in young people, who tend to stay up late, sleep too little, and drive at night. One study found that in 55 percent of sleep-related crashes, drivers were age 25 years or younger and were predominantly men. Another study found almost one-third of commercial drivers have some degree of sleep apnea.
4. **TRUE.** Research has provided a good picture of the common characteristics of drowsy-driving crashes, which tend to occur at night or in mid-afternoon, involve a single vehicle running off the roadway, lack any evidence of braking, and involve a young male driving alone.
5. **FALSE.** Sleep apnea is a condition in which a person's airway collapses many times to halt breathing until the person briefly awakens. The most common signs of sleep apnea are loud, irregular snoring, and excessive daytime sleepiness. Studies indicate that persons with untreated sleep apnea have two to seven times more crashes than people without the disorder. Studies also show that once treated, most patients can be safe drivers once again.
6. **FALSE.** Things such as heavy meals, warm rooms, and long drives only unmask the presence of sleep deprivation or sleep debt; they do not cause sleepiness.
7. **FALSE.** Sleep is not voluntary. If you're tired, you can fall asleep and never know it. When you're driving at 60 miles per hour and fall asleep for a few seconds (a microsleep), you can travel up to the length of a football field without any control of your vehicle.
8. **TRUE.** According to studies, drivers in fatigue-related crashes were more likely to report problems sleeping prior to a crash than drivers in other non-sleep crashes.
9. **FALSE.** An open window or music has no lasting effect on a person's ability to stay awake. In fact, they may mask the person's lack of alertness further.
10. **TRUE.** If you are driving and your thoughts begin to wander, it is time to pull over and take a short nap, consume some caffeine, or stop driving for the day.
11. **FALSE.** Sleep is not money. You can't store up sleep to borrow it later on. But, just as with money, you can go into debt.
12. **FALSE.** The only safe driver is an alert driver. Even the safest drivers become confused and use poor judgment when they are sleepy. In addition, alcohol makes fatigue much worse. One drink has the same effect on a tired driver as four or five drinks for a well-rested person.