



Sleep Deprived? How Does this Compare to Drinking too Much Alcohol?

According to reports from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA³), drowsy driving was responsible for at least 91,000 car crashes, 50,000 injuries, and 795 deaths in 2017. These figures are fairly consistent year-on-year. By contrast, alcohol was thought to be involved in 9,949 fatal crashes in 2017, comprising almost 30% of all fatal crashes.

Alcohol impairment is fairly easy to measure using blood alcohol measurements, but sleep deprivation is tougher to define, especially after the fact. As most people are reluctant to admit they were driving while sleepy, experts believe that drowsy driving accidents are often mistakenly attributed to other factors.

Studies have shown that going too long without sleep can impair your ability to drive the same way as drinking too much alcohol. Being awake for at **least 18 hours** is the same as someone having a blood content (BAC) of 0.05%. Being awake for at least 24 hours is equal to having a blood alcohol content of 0.10%.

Take regular breaks, and when you notice yourself getting sleepy, pull over and take a 20-minute nap in a safe place. Caffeine, opening the window, and turning up the radio are only short-term fixes and may leave you vulnerable to dangerous “microsleeps.”

