

Driving and Hepatic Encephalopathy (HE)

Why should I be concerned about driving with HE?

Hepatic [heh-PAT-ik] encephalopathy [en-sef-uh-LOP-uh-thee] (HE) is a condition that causes confusion and other thinking problems in people with liver disease. Between 2 and 6 of every 10 people with liver disease have HE. HE can change a person’s mood, sleep patterns, and body movements. These symptoms affect the ability to drive safely. **Symptoms are the same as those of drunk drivers. Patients with HE have a 4 to 5 times greater risk of accidents.**



HE Symptoms and Driving Skills	
Symptoms	→ Effect on driving skills
Poor attention span	→ Distracted, less aware of other drivers, or drift into other lanes
Difficulty learning new things	→ Overwhelmed and stressed with new destinations, construction, or traffic jams
Disorientation or confusion	→ Confused navigation or vehicle operation
Poor or interrupted sleep patterns	→ Drowsy when driving or increased autopilot driving (less aware)
Slow response time	→ Delayed reaction time
Memory problems	→ Poor habitual or “reflex” driving; fast decisions are made incorrectly

- ### What can I do to stay safe?
- 1 Don’t drive if you have HE.** Use a rideshare service, public transportation, or ride with a friend or family member.
 - 2 Request a driving assessment** at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to make sure you are safe to drive.

**Driving with HE is not worth the risk of your life, property, or the lives of others around you.
Do not drive.**

