



THEME OF THE MONTH
JUNE 2022

DRINK SPIKING & DATE RAPE DRUGS



WHAT IS DRINK SPIKING?

A person's drink can be spiked to make them more vulnerable for a variety of motives, this can include theft or sexual assault.

Different types of spiking can include the following substances being added to drinks:

- Alcohol
- 'Date rape' drugs
- Illegal drugs
- Prescription drugs (e.g. stimulants, tranquilisers, sedatives, opiates)

Drink spiking can happen to an alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink. The effects can be unpredictable but are likely to be more serious if someone who's had their drink spiked has also consumed more alcohol, or other drugs. This is because of the combination of effects from the different drugs working at the same time.

Shots of alcohol can be added to drinks to make them stronger, causing someone to get drunk much quicker than expected. Or sometimes a drink can be spiked with drugs that are specifically designed to incapacitate someone.

It is important to be able to recognise the signs your drink has been spiked or how to help someone you suspect has been a victim.



SYMPTOMS OF DRINK SPIKING

The effects of drink spiking vary depending on what the individual has been spiked with. Symptoms can include:

- Lowered inhibitions
- Loss of balance
- Feeling sleepy
- Visual problems
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Unconsciousness

The symptoms will depend on lots of factors such as the substance or mix of substances used (including the dose), their size and weight, and how much alcohol they have already consumed.

HOW TO AVOID DRINK SPIKING

Ensuring all venues are safe from assault and harassment such as drink spiking is everyone's responsibility. Any venue that is licensed to sell alcohol has a legal duty for public safety and the prevention of crime and disorder on their premises, and this is monitored by their local authority. These licenses to sell alcohol usually include conditions to ensure that the venue has appropriate security and staff training in place.

Some venues may supply drink stoppers for the top of your bottle or glass to prevent someone dropping something in your drink.

Testing kits are also available that can be used to detect certain drugs. However, these don't test for all types of drugs, so don't always work, and they can't detect extra alcohol in your drink.

Reporting suspected drink spiking to a venue and the police is one way to ensure enough steps are being taken to keep people safe.

There are also things we can do as individuals to help avoid being a victim of drink spiking.

Drink spiking can happen in any situation, at home or on a night out. However, there are a few things you can do to protect yourself:

- Never leave your drink unattended, whether it's alcoholic or not
- Don't accept a drink from someone you don't know
- Avoid drinking too much by sticking to the UK low risk drinking guidelines
- Stick together with friends, and look out for each other



HOW TO HELP SOMEONE YOU THINK HAS BEEN SPIKED

If you think a friend has had their drink spiked, and they are showing any of the symptoms there are a few things you can do to help:

- Tell a bar manager, bouncer or member of staff
- Stay with them and keep talking to them
- Call an ambulance if their condition deteriorates
- Don't let them go home on their own
- Don't let them leave with someone you don't know or trust
- Don't let them drink more alcohol - this could lead to more serious problems

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU'VE BEEN ASSAULTED

One of the effects of date rape drugs can be amnesia, or loss of memory. This means it's possible that you won't be sure if you've been assaulted. But if you suspect you've been physically or sexually assaulted it's important to tell someone that you trust.

You can go to the police or hospital accident and emergency department. If you don't feel able to do that right away, there are Rape Crisis charity helplines you can call for support and advice:

England and Wales: 0808 802 9999
(12–2.30pm and 7-9.30pm every day)

Scotland: 0808 801 0302 or text 07537 410 027
(6pm - midnight every day)

Northern Ireland: 08000 246 991
(Monday and Thursday, 6 - 8pm)



DATE RAPE DRUG FACTS



- Date rape drugs are drugs used to assist in a sexual assault, which is any type of sexual activity a person does not agree to.
- These drugs can affect you very quickly and cause victims to become weak, confused, and even pass out. You may not remember what happened while you were drugged. Date rape drugs can also cause seizures and even death.
- The most common date rape drugs, also called “club drugs”, are flunitrazepam (Rohypnol), gamma hydroxybutyric acid (GHB), and ketamine. These drugs may come as pills, liquids, or powders.
- Alcohol may also be considered a date rape drug because it affects judgment and behaviour and can be used to help commit sexual assault.
- The club drug “ecstasy” (MDMA) has also been used to commit sexual assault.
- Protect yourself by not accepting drinks from others, not sharing drinks, watching your drink, and having a non-drinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens.
- If you suspect you have been exposed to a date rape drug or have been sexually assaulted, call 999 and get to an emergency room immediately.



WHAT ARE DATE RAPE DRUGS?

Rohypnol (or Roofie) and Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB) are the most commonly known 'date-rape' drugs. Both drugs can be used to commit physical and sexual assaults as they can sedate or incapacitate a victim, making them more vulnerable to attack.

If your drink has been spiked with a date rape drug it's unlikely that you will see, smell or taste any difference, no matter what type of drink you are having. Most date rape drugs take effect within 15-30 minutes and symptoms usually last for several hours.

HOW ARE DATE RAPE DRUGS USED?

Someone can use date rape drugs or alcohol to overpower you so you do not know what is happening or remember the assault. Sometimes date rape drugs are put into a drink without you knowing. Individuals are also being targeted in a sinister new crime where they are injected with date rape drugs via needles in pubs and nightclubs.

INJECTION DATE RAPE ATTACKS

There have been reports of young women being injected during nights out in cities across the UK. Victims say they have been pierced with a needle in their leg, hands and back and woke up to no recollection of the night. Leaving them with a pinprick mark surrounded by a giant bruise.

Those being spiked via injection also carry the risk of shared or unclean needles being used, posing threats of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

HOW TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF DRINK SPIKING

TIPS TO STAY SAFE

- Plan your night out, including your journey there and back.
- Make sure the venue you are going to is licensed – venues are required to take steps to ensure the safety of their customers.
- When going to a pub, club or party avoid going alone. Friends can look out for one another.
- Stay aware of what's going on around you and keep away from situations you don't feel comfortable with.
- Think very carefully about whether you should leave a pub, club or party with someone you've just met.
- Make sure your mobile phone has plenty of charge in it before you leave home and keep your mobile safe.

HOW TO AVOID DRINK SPIKING?

- Always buy your own drink and watch it being poured.
- Don't accept drinks from strangers.
- Never leave your drink unattended while you dance or go to the toilet.
- Don't drink or taste anyone else's drink.
- Throw your drink away if you think it tastes odd.



DRINK SPIKING: SHORT VIDEOS

To show how easy it is to spike a drink without you noticing, this woman filmed herself doing just that. In this video she explains her story and why she chose to raise awareness of drink spiking.

TikToker Shows How Easy it is to Spike a Drink

Three women explain how drink spiking has impacted them.

Drink spiking: 'We don't feel safe going out any more'

A student at the University of Nottingham, believes she was spiked by injection while out clubbing with friends during freshers' week.

Student fears she was spiked by injection on night out: 'The memory loss is extreme'

LSP'S SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT TEAM

If you have any concerns at all, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our Safeguarding and Prevent team:

Safeguarding and Prevent Officer: Andy Hamer

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