



# DRINK SPIKING

## What is Drink Spiking?

'Drink Spiking' is the term used for the act of secretly placing drugs into drinks. The motive being to incapacitate a person for the purpose of sexual assault, rape, robbery, kidnapping or other crimes.

Drink spiking is a premeditated act, a personal violation and a criminal offence. It is a global issue that is on the rise.

When someone's drink is spiked with alcohol or drugs, the victim may not realise it until it is far too late and they are either unconscious or unable to communicate properly.

Most people who have had their drinks spiked eventually blackout. A blackout can last for up to 12 hours and can be followed by memory loss.

Drugs traditionally used for drink spiking, such as Ketamine, GHB and Rohypnol, and domestically manufactured illicit drugs, are available in most sectors of society. The availability of drugs coupled with alcohol consumption, has resulted in social environments becoming favoured places for those who wish to perpetrate drug-assisted crimes. Statistics show that there is a rising epidemic of

drug-assisted sexual assault and violence – particularly amongst young adults.

## What Drugs Are Used?

### GHB

This drug has effects similar to that of ecstasy and most often comes in the form of a liquid or powder.

Its effects take place in 10 to 20 minutes. This drug can be very dangerous but becomes even more dangerous when added to alcohol.

Effects of GHB include inability to speak properly, poor motor coordination, sleepiness, amnesia, hallucinations and short-term comas.

GHB is odourless and colourless, although it may have a slightly salty or bitter taste to it.

### Ketamine

Ketamine is designed to be used by veterinarians as an injectable anaesthetic for animals.

It can be taken in liquid or powder form.

Use of this drug creates an out of body experience which becomes more extreme the more you take.

Boredom, nausea, confusion, amnesia and vision problems are some of the effects of ketamine.

The effects of taking the drug occur after 5 to 20 minutes.

## Rohypnol

This drug is a popular drug of choice for drink spiking and most often comes in pill form.

This depressant is similar to the drug valium, but much more potent.

Effects of this drug include slurred speech, inability to concentrate, poor coordination, dizzy feelings, lack of inhibition, nausea and amnesia.

It takes approximately 15 to 30 minutes to feel the effects of this drug.

In more recent years, a blue dye has been added to this drug as a way of preventing drink spiking. This dye can not be seen in dark coloured beverages or bottles.

Additional drugs used in drink spiking can include:

- Benzodiazepines
- Cocaine
- Midazolam
- Ethanol
- Temazepam
- Muscle relaxants
- Hypnotics
- Ecstasy
- Burunganda
- LSD
- Methamphetamines
- Barbiturates
- Valium
- Alcohol – Alcohol is used to spike drinks too. People use alcohol in drink spiking either by adding it to a non-alcoholic beverage or by adding extra shots to an already alcoholic beverage. In some drink combinations, you may not even be able to taste added alcohol.



## How To Stay Safe

- Tell people you trust (parents, friends) where you are going and with whom.
- Make sure you can be contacted at all times.
- Only accept drinks you have seen being poured.
- Drink from bottles you have seen being opened in front of you.
- Don't leave your drink unattended.
- Don't drink anything that has been left unattended.
- Non-alcoholic drinks can also be spiked.
- Be aware of your friends' behaviour.

## What Are The Symptoms?

The effects of drink spiking differ for each person. Reactions differ based on a person's age, sex, size and on what type of drug or alcoholic beverage was given as well as how much alcohol you have already consumed. You may not realise your drink has been spiked by smelling it or tasting it because the substances used to spike drinks are often colourless and odourless.

Common effects include:

- Unconsciousness
- Decreased inhibitions
- Paralysis
- Inability to protect ones' self
- Memory loss
- Nausea, vomiting
- Muscle spasms
- Poor coordination
- Euphoric feelings
- Sleepiness
- Respiratory complications
- Slurring of speech
- Dizziness

Most people who have had their drinks spiked eventually blackout. A blackout can last up to 12 hours and is followed by memory loss. Some people who have been affected by drink spiking wake up feeling as if they have had more alcohol than they actually did, or that they have had sex but do not remember it. Other people wake up feeling almost hungover and have no memory of certain periods of time. Severe cases can lead to anxiety and potential trauma requiring treatment.

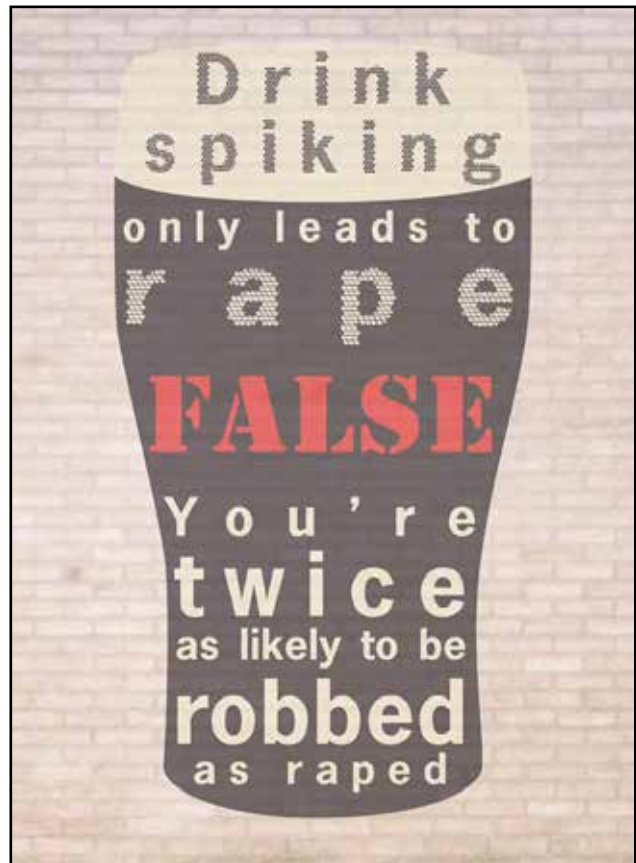
## What You Should Do

### YOU

- Tell someone you trust that can help immediately.
- Stay calm.
- You may have a few minutes before the full effects kick in.
- Don't continue to drink anything.
- If you can, test a suspicious drink with the Drink Detective.
- Stay with people that can help you.

### BE A FRIEND

- Alert someone you trust for extra help.
- Ensure that a possible victim is in a safe place.
- Secure their drink.
- Test a suspicious drink with the Drink Detective.
- If positive, call an ambulance – all drink spiking victims need medical attention.
- If you or your friend suspects drink spiking, contact the police and go to the emergency department of your nearest hospital. Urine or blood tests



performed within the first 24 hours are able to detect the presence of most drugs.

You may only have a few minutes to get help before the full effects of drink spiking drugs take over your body and stop you from being able to get help. Tell your friends or a bartender – someone you trust. Use a Drink Detective to see if your drink has been spiked. Remember that you will appear to be very drunk. Make sure someone understands that you need help. Do not go anywhere with anyone except someone you trust.

- Go to the nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department of a hospital.
- Tell the medical staff that you think your drink has been spiked.
- They will need to take blood and urine samples.
- Most drugs leave the body within 72 hours of being taken (the date rape drug GHB leaves the body within 12 hours), so it's important to be tested as soon as possible.
- Arrange for a trusted friend or relative to take you home and stay with you until the drugs have fully left your system.

## **If you've been sexually assaulted following drink spiking:**

You should seek medical attention as soon as possible. You may also need tests to determine whether you have any sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Drink Spiking is a criminal offence and should be reported to the police as soon as possible.

However, you don't have to report an attack to the police immediately if you don't want to. Instead, you can contact other organisations (see list below) for advice, treatment or a referral to a specialist service, such as a forensic examination:

- a sexual assault referral centre
- a doctor or practicing nurse at your GP office
- a voluntary organization, such as Rape Crisis
- a hospital emergency department
- a sexual health clinic
- a contraceptive clinic

Any forensic evidence that is obtained during tests can be stored while you decide whether to report the attack to the police.