What are Date Rape Drugs?

Date rape drugs are substances that are commonly used to intoxicate or drug people for the purpose of raping or sexually assaulting them. There are many substances that fall into this category and they are often given to people orally without their knowledge through methods such as slipping them into their drink. People who are given date rape drugs often become very intoxicated, may lose consciousness, become dizzy and lose the ability to consent to sexual activity. While some people take these or other drugs recreationally, this is not consent to sexual activity. Having sex with anyone under the influence of a drug (whether or not they took it consensually) is defined by law as rape, regardless of the gender, sexuality, race, ability, marital status, age, etc. of the survivor or perpetrator (See GenEq’s Sexual Assault and Rape Info Sheet for more info).

What are some common Date Rape Drugs/Substances?

**Rohypnol:**
- Commonly known as roofies, ruffies, “date rape drug of choice.”
- No taste or odor and dissolves in drinks.
- Sedation occurs 20-30 minutes after administration and lasts for several hours.
- Symptoms: Victim appears extremely intoxicated with slurred speech, no coordination, swaying and blood shot eyes.
- Often given to party participants in hopes of lowering inhibitions and facilitating potential sexual conquests.
- The amnesia producing effect of Rohypnol may prevent users from remembering how or why they took the drug or even that they were given it by others; this makes the investigation of sexual or other offenses very difficult.

**GHB:**
- Commonly known as “liquid ecstasy”, G, scoop, Easy Lay.
- Liquid and tablet GHB is commonly used in night clubs for effects similar to those of Rohypnol.
- Depresses central nervous system.
- It is also colorless and odorless in liquid with a slightly salty taste (can be used in powder and capsule forms).
- Symptoms: First, a sense of euphoria and relaxation; approximately 15 minutes to an hour after ingestion people experience nausea, drowsiness, respiratory distress, dizziness, seizures and amnesia.

**Ketamine Hydrochloride:**
- Commonly known as K, Special K, Vitamin K, Make-her-mine.
- Symptoms: delirium, vivid hallucinations, confusion, irrationality, slurred speech, delayed reaction time, amnesia and coma.
- When taken orally the effects take 10-20 minutes to be realized. The effects last less than 3 hours.
- In its undiluted form it looks like an off-white powder but when diluted it looks like slightly colored water.
Alcohol

• While many people consume alcohol consensually, it is mentioned here because intoxicated persons are unable to give consent, and therefore having sex with them is considered rape/sexual assault (see GenEq’s Sexual Assault and Rape Info Sheet).

Other drugs

• Other types of drugs, from sleeping pills to cocaine, can be used as date rape drugs if they are given to people for the purpose of raping/sexually assaulting them.
• People under the influence of drugs and alcohol are incapable of consenting to sexual activity under the law, and having sex with them is considered rape/sexual assault (See genEq’s Safe Partying Info Sheet).

Prevention and immediate action:

• Don’t put your drink down. If your drink is out of sight, even for a few minutes, don’t finish it. Get yourself a new one - your safety is worth a few dollars.
• Don’t accept an open drink from anyone. If you order a drink in a bar, make sure you watch the bartender open the bottle or mix your drink.
• Avoid punch bowls. You never know what’s in the punch.
• Be alert to the behavior of friends. Anyone appearing disproportionately intoxicated in relation to the amount of alcohol they have consumed may have consumed a beverage that has been tampered with.
• Anyone who suspects that they have ingested a tampered with drink or consumed a sedative-like substance they should be taken to the hospital emergency room or should call for an ambulance. Be sure to keep a sample of the beverage for analysis. Ask to be tested for all date rape drugs as soon as possible (they don’t stay in your system for very long—GHB for 10-12 hours, Rohypnol for 36-72 hours)
• If you are intoxicated, do not go home with someone you don’t know. Stay with your friends or call the Night Escort Service to escort you to your destination. Don’t walk home alone while intoxicated.

Resources:

University Health Services (UHS)
510/642-2000
2222 Bancroft Way

UC Berkeley Police Department
Non-emergency: 510/642-6760
Emergency: 911 or 510/642-333 from a cell phone

Campus Night Escort Service
(510) 642-WALK (9255)

California Legislative Information
www.leginfo.ca.gov

Highland Hospital
Sexual Assault Response Team
1411 E 31st Street
Oakland, CA 94602

Gender Equity Resource Center
Sexual Harassment/Assault Resource Specialist
510/643-5727
http://geneq.berkeley.edu

Campus Climate & Compliance
Title IX
510/643-7985
http://ccac.berkeley.edu

Dance Safe
Promoting health and safety in the rave and nightclub community
www.dancesafe.org

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