

What is drink spiking?

Drink spiking is when alcohol or drugs are added to your drink when you don't know. As a consequence, you may suddenly feel drunk or drug affected. Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can be spiked, and it can happen at clubs, bars, parties, barbeques or any place where drinks are being served.

WHAT DRUGS ARE USED IN SPIKING?

Alcohol

Many people assume that drinks get spiked with drugs, but alcohol is actually the most common way to spike drinks. Drink spikers either add alcohol to non-alcoholic drinks or add extra shots of spirits to alcoholic drinks. This makes your drinks far stronger than you think!

You may not be able to taste the alcohol that's been added to your drink, especially if it's sweet or has a strong flavour or you have already had a couple of drinks.

Depressant drugs

Depressant drugs, especially sedatives like Rohypnol, can also be used to spike drinks. When these drugs are mixed with alcohol, they have a very strong effect. If your drink has been spiked with a depressant, you may feel extremely drunk and it's not uncommon for people to experience 'blackouts' (they forget things that happened the previous night).

The drug's effects can kick in quite quickly, usually within 15 to 30 minutes. The effects can last up to eight hours or even longer, depending on how spiked your drink was and other factors like how much alcohol you had to drink.

Initial effects to look out for include:

- suddenly feeling sleepy or dizzy
- feeling like you're going to faint - even if you haven't drunk much
- being uncoordinated or slurring your words

Other more serious effects include:

- losing your inhibitions
- being unable to make sensible decisions (putting you at risk of sexual, or other, assault)
- memory loss
- not being able to see properly
- feeling like you're going to be sick
- losing consciousness

GHB

The effects of Gamma hydroxybutyrate acid (GHB) added to an alcoholic drink are very serious. GHB on its own is dangerous enough, but when added to alcohol, it can have unpredictable and sometimes lethal effects.

If your drink has been spiked with GHB, it can cause memory loss, make you uncoordinated and your speech slurred. You can't see, smell or taste GHB so it can be added to drinks without any trace.

The effects of GHB may include hallucinations, feeling really sleepy, nausea and vomiting. The more serious effects of GHB include having convulsions or seizures, and unconsciousness or abrupt, short-term coma.