

What are date rape drugs?

Drugs are sometimes used to make rape easier. These drugs make people helpless, unable to defend themselves or remember what happened.

Sometimes called predator drugs, they can be used on women or men, strangers or acquaintances.

Date rape drugs can be slipped into a drink. They can be added to or put in place of other drugs a person may be using.

Some common date rape drugs:

- **Rohypnol** is a strong sleeping and anti-anxiety pill. Known as *roofies*, *rophies*, *roche* and *forget-me pill*.
- **GHB** is a sedative that can produce a high feeling. Known as *G*, *liquid Ecstasy*, *grievous bodily harm*, *scoop* and *Georgia home boy*.
- **Ketamine** is a sedative and animal tranquilizer. Known as *K*, *special K*, *ket*, *vitamin K* and *cat valium*.

Rape is when a person is forced to have unwanted sexual activity. Some rapes involve the use of drugs.

1

What do date rape drugs look like?

Date rape drugs are colorless, odorless and almost tasteless. They are hard to detect when added to drinks.

- **Rohypnol** tablets are white and dissolve in liquid that can be swallowed or injected. When crushed, the tablets can be smoked.

Some tablets change the color of a drink or how it looks. But some don't.

- **GHB** is sold as a liquid that is swallowed. It has a slight salty taste. GHB can also be made into white powder and put into capsules.
- **Ketamine** is a liquid. It can also be made into powder or pills. It can be swallowed, snorted or injected. It can also be added to marijuana or tobacco and smoked.

Tests may not work

Coasters and cards that test for GHB or ketamine in drinks by changing color are not 100% accurate. They may not work with all drinks. They don't test for Rohypnol or other drugs.

2

What do date rape drugs do to the body?

Date rape drugs slow down the brain and the nervous system. This can make it hard for a person to think, move or speak.

- **They can make people relax and lower inhibitions.** This can affect judgment and cause people to do things they wouldn't otherwise do.
- **They can blur vision** and cause people to see things that aren't there.
- **They can cause drowsiness, dizziness and confusion.** People may not know where they are, what is going on around them, or what is happening to them.
- **They can cause nausea** and vomiting.
- **They can make people feel numb** or unable to move or speak. They can also cause shaking, muscle spasms and seizures.
- **They can cause loss of consciousness.** They can make a person pass out for a few minutes or many hours.
- **They can cause memory loss.** People can't remember what they said or did or what happened to them while under the effect of the drug.
- **Rohypnol and GHB can lower blood pressure, heart rate and breathing.** This can lower the amount of oxygen and blood that gets to the brain and body.

How long does it take?

- **Rohypnol** effects begin in 15 to 20 minutes and can last for more than 12 hours. It can be detected in the body for up to 72 hours.
- **GHB** effects can be felt in 15 to 20 minutes and can last for 2 to 6 hours. It can be detected in the body for up to 24 hours.
- **Ketamine** effects begin within 4 minutes when injected or 10 to 20 minutes when swallowed and can last up to 5 hours. It can be detected in the body for up to 48 hours.

3



4

Are date rape drugs life threatening?

Date rape drugs can cause:

- **Coma.** When taken in large amounts or mixed with other drugs, including some prescription drugs, date rape drugs can shut down the brain and cause loss of consciousness.
- **Death.** The body can slow down too much and cause breathing to stop, the heart to stop beating, or the brain to stop working.

Alcohol makes the effects of these drugs much worse. When mixed with alcohol, even low doses of date rape drugs can kill.

Are they illegal?

Only healthcare providers and veterinarians can use GHB or Ketamine legally. All Rohypnol is illegal in the U.S.

There are harsh federal prison terms and fines for anyone who possesses or uses a drug to commit sexual assault. If the victim is hurt or dies from the drug, the person who gave the drug can be held responsible.

Every person has a different reaction to a drug. No amount is safe.

5

How can I protect myself?

Tips for staying safe

- Only go to parties, clubs or raves with a trusted friend. Watch out for each other.
- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Always get your own drink—even water.
- Only accept drinks in containers that you open yourself.

Know the symptoms of drug poisoning

You may feel more intoxicated than you should feel. You might also have:

- Problems remembering things you recently said or did
- Loss of coordination, dizziness, blackouts
- Nausea, vomiting
- Confusion
- Chills and sweating
- Trouble moving or speaking

If you feel ill, get help immediately from someone you trust.

Call 9-1-1 if you think you or someone you know may have been given a date rape drug. Stay with the person until help arrives.

6

To Learn More

National Institute on Drug Abuse
1-301-443-1124
www.drugabuse.gov

National Women's Health Information Center
1-800-994-9662
www.womenshealth.gov

DanceSafe
A harm-reduction group focused on raves.
www.dancesafe.org

Professional models were used in all photos. This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health care professional's opinion or care. Written by Pamela Gilbeau Peterson, PhD. Reviewed 2019. Revised 2016. © 2004 ETR. All rights reserved. It is a violation of U.S. copyright law to reproduce any portion of this publication.

Title No. 284 [19-0524]

advancing health equity **etr.** etr.org/store 800•321•4407

What You Need to Know About

date rape drugs

