Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
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Factsheet

Drink spiking



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year:

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Drugs (General)

Tags: drink spiking, roofied, teenagers, parents

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

What is drink spiking?

When someone adds alcohol or another drug to a person's drink, without their knowledge or consent, then the drink is "spiked". Research has found that adding extra alcohol to someone's drink is the most common form of drink spiking. Reasons for why someone may spike another person's drink include: to have 'fun' or play a joke, to cause harm, or to sexually assault someone. Drink spiking in all forms is illegal. Adding something to someone else's drink, even if the drink isn't consumed, can result in being fined or jailed.

Regardless of the reason, drink spiking can cause serious harm to the victim.

Symptoms of drink spiking

The symptoms someone might show after consuming a spiked drink include:

- Feeling nauseous.
- Feeling drowsy (tired), dizzy, and/or faint.
- Feeling drunk (feeling 'out of it') after consuming only a few sips of alcohol.
- Passing out or blacking out.
- Waking up feeling confused with little to no memory of the events from the previous day.

If you experience these symptoms, your drink may have been spiked. Even if you are uncertain whether this has happened, it is important to seek help from the emergency department, first aid tent, or a doctor who can assess and manage any substance-related effects.

What to do if a drink is spiked

If you or a friend drink a spiked drink, call 000 immediately and ask for ambulance assistance. If a person is unconscious, or non-responsive but breathing, they should be placed in the recovery position while waiting for help to arrive.

- Notify a trusted person, this could be a friend, host, venue staff, or parents.
- Stay with the affected person and give them bottled water.
- If you or a friend are experiencing symptoms of drink spiking but aren't sure whether you've had a spiked drink go to the emergency department or doctor to assess and manage any symptoms.
- Monitor symptoms for at least 24hrs after the incident and go to the emergency department or a doctor to manage any potential harms from the substance used to spike the drink.
- Contact the police to report the drink spiking incident.
- If you or your friend have been sexually assaulted or raped from drink spiking, you can find help on the 1800RESPECT website or call 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) for free telephone counselling. You can also go the emergency deportment, your GP (Doctor) and/or report the incident to Police.

How to avoid drink spiking

Below are some practical strategies that can help to prevent drink spiking, whether you are at someone's house or in public. Remember that both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks can be spiked, so it's important to be alert even if you're not drinking alcohol.

- Do not accept drinks from strangers.
- Do not leave drinks unattended. If you need to use the bathroom or leave your drink for some reason, leave it with a trusted friend or discard it and only drink from a new one.
- Buy your own drinks and watch closely as they are being poured.
- Do not taste or drink another person's drink.
- If your drink tastes different or odd, throw it away.
- If you notice suspicious behaviour tell an adult or venue management immediately.
- If you see someone spiking a drink, tell the intended victim what you saw and report this to staff or adults at the venue.
- If you are around people who are joking about spiking someone's drink, speak up if you feel comfortable and tell them it's not funny and it can cause serious harm.

Evidence Base

This factsheet was developed following expert review by researchers at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney. A full list of sources which informed this factsheet can be seen below.

Sources

1. Swan, S.C., et al., *Just a dare or unaware? Outcomes and motives of drugging ("drink spiking") among students at three college campuses.*Psychology of violence, 2017. 7(2): p. 253.
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5. Fischer, J.A., et al., *Development of guidelines for adults on how to communicate with adolescents about mental health problems and other sensitive topics: a Delphi study.* SAGE Open, 2013. 3(4): p. 2158244013516769.
6. Welsh, C., *Harry Potter and the Underage Drinkers: Can We Use This to Talk to Teens about Alcohol?*Journal of Child & Adolescent Substance Abuse, 2007. 16(4): p. 119-126.

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