

Stop Spiking



Spiking is when a person gives alcohol or other drugs to another person without their knowledge or consent.

It is illegal and puts people at risk.

This booklet looks at the signs that someone may have been spiked and how to look after friends and yourself (warning: mention of sexual assault).



Alcohol is the most common drug used to spike drinks.

Examples of spiking with alcohol could include:

- **Putting double measures in someone's drink when they only asked for a single**
- **Topping up someone's glass when they don't notice e.g. are in the bathroom**
- **Buying someone a drink when they are already drunk**



Other drugs used can include:

- **GHB or GBL**
- **Benzodiazepines including Valium (diazepam) and Rohypnol (flunitrazepam)**
- **Ketamine (a dissociative drug)**

These drugs can be dangerous when mixed with alcohol as they lower responses and awareness of pain, but also heart rate and breathing.

They do not always have a strong taste or smell.



Other examples of spiking could include:

- Giving someone a line and telling them it's cocaine when it is actually ketamine
- Giving someone less experienced with drugs or someone who is smaller in body size or frame the same dose as you

Anyone charged with spiking (if not associated with rape, assault or robbery) could face up to 10 years in prison. They could also be charged as an accessory to any crime experienced by the victim while still affected (Offences Against the Person Act 1861, section 24; Sexual Offences Act 2003, section 61).



What are the signs of being spiked?

Regardless whether a person has been choosing to take drugs including alcohol or not and depending on what has been used to spike them, indications could include:

- Rapid change in level of inebriation
- Dizziness or nausea
- Confusion
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Slurring or difficulty speaking
- Vomiting
- Loss of consciousness

If you are with someone who displays any symptoms it is best not to assume a reason but make sure you look after them.



Concerned about spiking by injection?

- Spiking by needle is uncommon, most spikings involve alcohol - however if you have been attacked with a needle please alert the police straight away.
- Most people will feel a scratch, sting or pain upon a needle entering the skin.
- Drugs most commonly used to incapacitate could take at least 15-20 seconds to inject, if not more.
- Contracting HIV from a needlestick injury is very rare.
- If anyone has had contact with bodily fluids that may contain HIV or hepatitis, Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is available via NHS and local sexual health services - PEP is best taken as soon as possible but can be taken up to 72 hours after exposure.
- HIV tests can be taken any time, you'll need to wait until at least 8 weeks after exposure for a definitive result.

If you think a friend may have been spiked

- Stay with them.
- Alert the venue manager or staff (where you feel safe to do so).
- Keep talking with them and giving reassurance if they're feeling distressed.
- Don't let them go home on their own.
- Don't let them leave with someone you don't know or trust.
- Encourage them not to take any more drugs including alcohol.
- Call an ambulance if their condition deteriorates or take them to A&E.



- Be aware that they may have been affected (then or in the past) by physical or sexual assault including rape by the perpetrator, and will need sensitive, trauma-informed support.
- They may have had items stolen e.g. check they have their keys or bank cards.
- Let them know they can speak to you about the experience at any time - services such as Rape Crisis are also there to help at any time.

If you think **YOU may have been spiked**

- Tell or call someone you trust e.g. a close friend, or family member - ask them to stay with you or come and meet you.
- Try to find a safe place or ask your trusted person to help.
- If you feel in danger, call 999.
- Be wary of accepting help from anyone you don't know or feel unsafe with (including people who may have been buying you drinks).
- If you feel unwell get to the nearest A&E department and let staff know you feel you may have been spiked.



- If you are not unwell, you can ask your trusted friend or relative to take you home but stay with you until the effects you are feeling have worn off.
- Do consider reporting it to the police as soon as possible, ideally within 12 hours as some drugs leave the body quickly.
- If reporting to the police they may ask for blood and urine samples - you can take a trusted friend or relative with you for support.
- Support is available at any time from Rape Crisis and various health services like student mental health support.



Sources of support

In a medical emergency (loss of consciousness; long-lasting disorientation, inability to communicate, significant and sustained increased heart rate or chest pain) – call 999

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline: 08088 01 03 02
www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Crew 2000 Scotland: dropin@crew2000.org.uk
or free text 07860047501 (see www.crew.scot
for opening hours)



Sources of information and training

Hollaback! Bystander Resources



Hollaback! Bystander Intervention Training



Sexism Free Night:
sexismfreenight.eu/training



NHS Inform:
HIV symptoms & treatments – Illnesses &
conditions



Tips to avoid spiking

- Do not spike anyone!
- If you know someone who has or is thinking of spiking someone, challenge them and if need be, report them!
- Avoid leaving drinks unattended.
- Items like 'spikeys' can make it more difficult for someone to spike your drink (available at Crew and various venues).
- Be vigilant if people are buying you drinks.
- Be wary if people are reaching over your drinks or hanging about where your drinks are.



What can venues do to help?

Stop what you are doing, **LISTEN**, pay attention and focus on the information the person is giving you.

It can be difficult to judge whether someone has consumed too much alcohol or has been spiked. Always believe the person who approaches you. **AVOID JUDGEMENT**, e.g. phrases that suggest you don't believe them, like 'Are you sure they've not just drunk too much?' or 'Why would someone want to spike you?'.

The next four pages use information from Avon and Somerset Police, Bristol City Centre BID, Bristol City Council and Plaster Creative Comms, with their kind permission.

KNOW your venue's procedure: your venue may have its own testing kits or may have a dedicated point of contact for any incidents. Ask now what the process is to ensure you make the person feel confident they are in good hands on the night.

The perpetrator may still be in your venue so please gather as much information as possible about the incident for police.

With another member of staff, help the individual to a place where they feel **SAFE** away from crowds.

Ask a friend or trusted individual to accompany the victim – check with bystanders/eye-witnesses to ensure that they know the victim well. Drink spiking is a scary experience, and the victim needs to be reassured they are safe.

If you are concerned that an assault has taken place, you can ask for a specially trained police officer to attend or signpost the victim to relevant resources.

Call an ambulance if they require medical attention (especially if they are unconscious) and advise them you suspect the person's drink might have been spiked.

REPORT the incident to the police via 999 as soon as possible. Drugs can leave the body as soon as 12 hours after consumption. It's vital that the individual gets tested quickly.

SEIZE the affected drink, containers and any remaining residues. These should be put in a secure place for examination by the police. Keep a note of the incident in your venue's incident book.

NEVER let the victim leave the venue **ALONE** or with anyone you are suspicious about. Ensure they have a planned journey home and are accompanied by someone they know and trust, and evidence has been gathered.

Read/download/share harm reduction resources

Crew Consent Guide



Crew Alcohol Information



Crew Benzodiazepines Guide



Crew GHB Information



Crew Ketamine Mini-Booklet



1. All bodies have and everybody has a right to safety, respect and bodily autonomy.

2. The biggest responsibility lies with anyone thinking about spiking not to do it.

Read Crew's full statement on spiking at www.crew.scot/crew-statement-on-spiking/

Please get in touch with us at Crew if you are concerned or have been affected by any of the information in this booklet.



www.crew.scot

dropin@crew2000.org.uk