

Concerned about spiking?

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

It is illegal and puts people at risk.

This booklet looks at the signs that someone may have been spiked, 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, 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 (without assault, rape or robbery) can face up to 10 years imprisonment. They can also be charged with conspiracy to other crimes experienced by the victim at the time*

*Offences against the Person Act 1861, section 24;
Sexual Offences Act 2003, section 61



What are the signs of being spiked?

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

- a 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 feel you have been attacked with a needle please alert the police straight away
- Most people will feel a scratch, sting or pain on a needle entering the skin
- Injecting enough drugs to incapacitate a person would likely take up to 15 seconds, 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 venue staff (if you feel safe to do so)
- keep talking and giving them reassurance
- don't let them go home on their own or 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
- check they have their belongings with them in case anything has been stolen
- be aware they may be affected (then or in the past) by physical or sexual assault and may need trauma-informed support



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 24 hrs 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



Tips to avoid spiking

- don't 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 when 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?

- train staff to be alert to spiking and its impacts, have a clear working system to deal with and report perpetrators and keep anyone affected safe (including staff)
- risk assess the venue space to look for blind spots or anywhere perpetrators could tamper with drinks or commit an assault
- we've heard of some venues replacing anyone's drink if they are concerned it has been tampered with, raising house lights and searching the full premises to ensure people are accounted for after reports of spiking: we applaud you!

What can you do to help?

- Listen and take people seriously if they report being spiked
- report it immediately if you see it
- have conversations about the fact spiking happens and about why
- learn about being an active bystander: there are great tips and resources such as www.ihollaback.org/bystander-resources/

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



www.crew.scot

dropin@crew2000.org.uk