

Supporting Student Athletes: Drink spiking: What is it and how can you prevent it?

As part of our commitment to the wellbeing of all students at BU, SportBU would like to ensure that all athletes and club members have a better understanding of some of the dangers associated with drinking in public and private spaces.

We have sourced the following article by [Unite Students](https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room/health-and-wellbeing/drink-spiking-what-is-it-and-how-can-you-prevent-it), Staff writer at The Common Room: <https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room/health-and-wellbeing/drink-spiking-what-is-it-and-how-can-you-prevent-it> 08 Oct 2021

Since 2015, the number of reported instances of drink spiking has more than doubled according to figures from UK police forces.

You might think it'll never happen to you, but you should still look out for yourself when you're having a few drinks, no matter where you are.

Let's take a look at spiking, how you can help prevent it, and what you should do if you think you or a friend has been spiked.

What is spiking?

If someone has added drugs or alcohol to your drink without your knowledge, you've been spiked. 'Spikers' don't discriminate, they target both men and women.

Drinks can be spiked with any drug but the most common are alcohol or 'date rape' drugs, such as Rohypnol or GHB (Gamma Hydroxybutyrate). These are often colourless and tasteless, which makes them easier to conceal.

Spiking can happen anywhere, and you should be especially vigilant in pubs and bars. Large indoor gatherings aren't currently allowed under the government's social distancing guidance, but when they are, remember that drink spiking can happen at parties too.

Why does spiking happen?

Sometimes the motive behind spiking is sex related, but that's not the only reason people do it. Sometimes it's for the purposes of theft, or because the spiker thinks it's a practical joke.

Many spiking victims don't remember what has happened. They may become confused, vulnerable, and unable to look after themselves. Knowing how to recognise the signs will allow you to help a friend in need.

Signs that somebody has been spiked

These vary depending on what you've been spiked with, but common symptoms include:

- Lowered inhibitions
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination and slurred speech
- Nausea
- Hallucinations
- Vomiting
- Paranoia
- Unconsciousness

Most date rape drugs will have an effect about 15-30 minutes after you've consumed them and the symptoms usually last for several hours.

If you start to feel strange or more drunk than you should be, get help straight away. If you think you've been spiked, go to A&E – ideally with someone you trust to help you.

How to help a spiking victim

If your friend is showing signs of being spiked, here's what to do:

- If you're at a bar, tell the manager or door staff. If you're at a party, tell the host.
- Stay with your friend and keep talking to them
- Call an ambulance if their condition deteriorates
- If you're on your own, call someone you trust for support

How to avoid having your drink spiked

The most important things to do are never leave your drink unattended, never accept a drink from somebody you don't know, and don't drink anything that you didn't see being poured.

You can also use a [Spikey](#), which goes inside the neck of the bottle and stops anything being dropped into it. Or, keep your thumb over the top of your bottle in between sips.

If you're at a house party (when we're allowed to have them again), stay away from the punch bowl – you don't know how strong it is or if drugs have been slipped in.

Spiked or drunk?

Being very drunk can be confused with being spiked as the symptoms can be similar.

Try to keep track of how many drinks and units you've had. It'll help you stay in control and spot the signs of being spiked early.

[Download the FREE Drinkaware app on Android](#) or [iPhone](#) and put your knowledge to the test.