

## **What are Rape Drugs?**

Rape drugs are exactly what they sound like. Rapists use these drugs to weaken their victims and make them easier to assault. These drugs can make a person confused, drowsy, dizzy, impair motor skills and judgment, and can even cause a person to lose consciousness. They can also impair memory, so that the survivor of a sexual assault is not able to remember what happened to them or clearly report the attack to the police. Two of the most common rape drugs are Rohypnol and GHB.

### **Rohypnol**

Rohypnol is the brand name for flunitrazepam. It is a benzodiazepine drug, similar to Valium or Xanax, though it has never been approved for any medical use in the United States. It is illegal to manufacture, distribute or possess Rohypnol in the U.S., but it is often smuggled in from countries where it is legally manufactured and prescribed. Some street names for Rohypnol are Roofies, Rophies, Roaches, Forget Pill, Poor Man's Quaalude, Lunch Money (referring to the drug's low price on the street), Pappas or Potatoes (referring to the mental capacity of someone under the influence of the drug), Whiteys, Dulcitas, Negatives or Minuses (referring to the markings on the 1 mg. tablets), R-2s, Roach-2s, Circles, Rope, Rib, Trip-and-Fall, Mind-Erasers, and Mexican Valium.

#### *What does it look like?*

When Rohypnol is smuggled into the U.S., it is usually in a tablet form. The pills are white, round and smaller than a dime. They are normally found in foil-backed, clear, plastic "blister-packs" or "bubble-packs," similar to packaging for cold and flu medications. Rohypnol is often crushed into a powder, or may be found in a liquid form.

#### *What are the effects?*

Rohypnol is a powerful sedative and the effects may be noticed within 15 to 30 minutes and can last for many hours. Rohypnol affects both physical and mental functioning. Physically, motor functioning is impaired; the victim may have difficulty walking or speaking clearly, become drowsy, dizzy, or may even lose consciousness. Effects on mental functioning include confusion, lowered inhibitions, impaired judgment, disorientation and partial or full amnesia. These effects can combine to make the person seem drunk. When combined with alcohol

or other drugs, however, the effects can be much more serious, resulting in low blood pressure, difficulty breathing, coma and even death. Rohypnol can be detected in the blood for up to 24 hours and in the urine for up to 48 hours.

*How is it used?*

Rohypnol is usually dropped into a drink of some kind. Once it dissolves it is tasteless, odorless and colorless, making it virtually impossible for the person who drinks it to know they've been drugged until they begin to feel the effects. The manufacturers of Rohypnol have begun research into a form that can be detected easily in a drink, but currently, the undetectable form is still in use.

## **GHB**

GHB is gamma-hydroxybutyrate. It is a synthetic drug that acts as a depressant on the central nervous system. Although it has been tested for potential medical uses in the U.S., it is illegal to use it outside of FDA approved research trials. It has also been promoted for bodybuilding, though no benefits have ever been documented and the FDA issued a warning against its use in 1990, due to the potential negative effects. Street names for GHB include Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Liquid X, Liquid E, Liquid Ecstasy, Easy Lay, G, Vita-G, G-juice, Georgia Home Boy, Great Hormones, Somatomax, Bedtime Scoop, Soap, Gook, Gamma 10, and Energy Drink.

*What does it look like?*

GHB is usually in a clear, liquid form that is odorless and colorless, though it has also been produced as a white, crystalline powder. It is often distributed at clubs, raves, bars, or parties in capfuls, spoonfuls, drops, small paper cupfuls, or "swigs."

*What are the effects?*

Like Rohypnol, GHB affects both mental and physical functioning. Some of the more common effects include dizziness, confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness, seizures, difficulty breathing, nausea and vomiting, and coma. It can also cause amnesia for the time period following ingestion. Also, like Rohypnol, when GHB is combined with alcohol or other drugs, the effects can be much more serious and even life threatening.

GHB is particularly dangerous because it is often homemade, making it extremely difficult to know the strength of any given batch. It is also dangerous because of the narrow margin between the amount needed to produce intoxication and the amount that will cause harmful effects, making it very easy to overdose.

*How is it used?*

Since GHB is a clear liquid, it is very easy to drop or squirt it into a drink. Once dissolved it is colorless and odorless, though it does have a slightly salty taste. This taste may be masked by a sweet liqueur, or explained as an "energy drink."

### **Other Rape Drugs**

Any drug that can be used to produce sedative or amnesic effects can be used to facilitate a rape. One such drug that is emerging as a new rape drug is Ketamine (Special K, Ket, "K," Vitamin K). Ketamine is an animal tranquilizer and anesthetic that can be found in pill, powder or liquid form. It can cause amnesia, hallucinations and dissociation (a feeling of the mind being separated from the body).

It is important to note as well that the drug most commonly associated with sexual assault and rape is alcohol. Alcohol can result in many of the same effects as other rape drugs, including dizziness, confusion, lowered inhibitions, impaired judgment, nausea, impaired motor functioning, and if enough is consumed, unconsciousness and amnesia (or "black outs"). Yet alcohol is consumed at a much higher rate than any other rape drug and is usually done so voluntarily. Therefore, as essential as it is to be aware of the potential for being slipped a roofie or GHB, it is also extremely important that you monitor your own and your friends alcohol intake and intoxication level as well, as being drunk can make you as vulnerable to assault as many other rape drugs.

### **How do I Know if I've been Drugged?**

The effects of any drug differ from person to person, depending on height, weight, sex, metabolism, and other factors. One thing that is always true, however, is that the effects of rape drugs are stronger and more dangerous when mixed with alcohol or other drugs. Some signs that you may have been drugged include:

- You feel much more drunk than you should for the amount of alcohol you've had
- You feel as though someone has had sex with you, but you don't remember it
- You remember having a drink, but don't remember anything after that
- You wake up feeling more hung over than usual, confused or "fuzzy," or can't remember a period of time or the events that might have occurred

### **What Can I Do?**

If you suspect that you have been drugged, there are several things that you can do:

- Get to a safe place and get help immediately
- Contact a friend or family member to stay with you and assist you with getting help
- Call the police
- Go to a hospital emergency room for medical care and evidence collection. You may be unaware of injuries that occurred while you were drugged. Request that the hospital take blood or urine samples to screen for rape drugs.
- Try to preserve physical evidence of the assault. Don't shower, bathe, or douche. Try not to urinate if possible, and bring the clothing you were wearing with you to the hospital. Bring along any other materials that might contain evidence, such as the glass that held your drink.
- Contact a rape crisis center for information and support. You can contact RAINN at 1-800-656-HOPE and they will connect you with a center or hotline in your area or come into the Student Health Center and talk to one of the staff members there.