

DRUG FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT



Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault (DFSA) is any form of sexual assault, (unwanted kissing, touching, rape, etc.), that is committed upon a person rendered incapacitated or helpless by alcohol or drugs, thus being incapable of giving or withholding consent.

FACTS ABOUT DRUG FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULTS

- **Anyone can be a victim of DFSA** regardless of age, sexual orientation or gender, though females ages 16 to 24 are the highest at risk.
- **A person does not necessarily have to be drugged by a “Date Rape” drug to become a victim of DFSA.** In fact, the most common drug involved is alcohol, seconded by marijuana.
- **The perpetrator is not necessarily the one who administers the drug.** The victim often voluntarily takes the drug or alcohol, but is assaulted upon becoming incapacitated.
- **Approximately 75% of sexual assaults are committed by people known to the victim.**
- **The ONLY person responsible for a sexual assault is the person who commits it.** Being intoxicated by alcohol or drugs is NEVER an invitation for sex.
- **Most sexual assault cases are never reported to Police.** Victims may be embarrassed, have a perceived sense of guilt, or because they cannot remember what specifically happened.

THE DRUGS

Alcohol

Most DFSAs involve alcohol consumption, either on its own, or used in conjunction with drugs whose effects are amplified when combined with alcohol. The offender takes advantage of a victim who is either too intoxicated to consent or say no, or is completely passed out. From a legal standpoint, a victim can be too intoxicated to give consent, regardless of whether the offender is intoxicated as well.



Rohypnol and other Benzodiazepines

With street names such as “Roofies” and the “Forget pill,” Rohypnol is a brand name for the drug Flunitrazepam, a powerful benzodiazepine that produces a sleepy, relaxed feeling, accompanied by blackouts and complete loss of memory. It leads to impaired motor movements, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and difficulties in speaking. It comes in pill form and can be taken orally, dissolved in a drink or snorted. If dissolved in a drink it is odourless and tasteless, but may colour the liquid blue or murky because of a special new dye. The effects last about 8 hours and can cause death if mixed with alcohol.



Rohypnol tablets are white and are single- or cross-scored on one side with “ROCHE” and “1” or “2” encircled on the other.

GHB

Also known as “G” or “Liquid Ecstasy,” this powerful central nervous system depressant is usually used illicitly for its euphoric and sedative effects, which are very similar to alcohol. Like Rohypnol however, it can blur one’s memory for many hours, and side effects can include nausea, difficulty breathing, seizures, sleep, coma or even death, especially when combined with alcohol. It is usually a colourless, odourless liquid that can be easily poured into any drink, but can cause the drink to have a slightly soapy or bitter taste.



Ketamine

Ketamine hydrochloride, also known as “Special-K” or the “Date Rape Drug” on the street, is a dissociative anaesthetic that has a combination of stimulant, depressant, hallucinogenic and analgesic properties. Ketamine will cause victims to lose their sense of time and may also blur their memory. It will dull pain and make a person feel “numb” or pass out. It can lead to hallucinations, delirium, impaired motor function, potentially fatal respiratory problems, nausea and convulsions. It comes in powder, capsule and liquid form, but is more noticeable when dissolved in drinks due to its very bad taste.



Cannabis – Marijuana, Hash, Hash Oil

Though the effects are very different than the drugs mentioned above, Cannabis is still the second most common drug found in DFSA crimes. This may be partially due to the higher frequency of use over other “date-rape” drugs. It also highlights the fact that people are at a higher risk of being sexually assaulted when they are intoxicated by any type of substance.



SAFETY TIPS

- Limit how much alcohol you drink. (Remember...not everyone has the same tolerance threshold.)
- Open bottles yourself or watch the bartender doing so. Do not accept open drinks from strangers or acquaintances. Never leave your drink unattended.
- If your drink looks, smells or tastes funny don't drink it!
- If you feel lightheaded, really drowsy or "too drunk", get assistance from a FRIEND. Do NOT accept a strangers offer to help.....they may want to take advantage of you.
- Arrive with friends and be sure to keep an eye on each other.
- Get help if you think one of your friends has been drugged.
- Have a designated buddy who can leave a party or bar with you at any time



SIGNS IT MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU

Many cases of DFSA are never reported to police. A main proponent of this is the fact that though a victim may sometimes have the general feeling that they were violated, they have little, blurred or no recollection of what happened. The following are a few signs that might help you figure out if you've been drugged and assaulted:

- You were not (heavily) drinking or using drugs, yet you have little memory of the previous night.
- Your muscles are sore.
- You have bruises or other signs of sexual assault.
- You have been undressed, or your clothes are ripped, missing or stained.

**Health care professionals do not have to report a sexual assault to police, but they may need to report to child protection if you're young or they feel you're still in danger.
If police are involved the decision to press charges often remains in your hands.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOU ARE A VICTIM OF DFSA

If you have the slightest suspicion that you have been drugged and sexually assaulted you should seek medical attention right away; preferably at a Sexual Assault Care Centre, which can be accessed at your local hospital emergency department. Consider the following:

- You may need to be treated for injuries and/or sexually transmitted infections.
- You might need to obtain emergency contraception ("the morning after pill") to prevent pregnancy.
- You may want to ask about speaking to a counselor or psychologist.

CONTACTING THE POLICE

It is a personal and often tough decision regarding whether or not to report a sexual assault to police. If you do choose to report the assault however, the sooner you do it, the better. Drugs used in DFSA's often wear away quickly, and it is important to obtain blood and urine samples for evidence of the suspected drug in your system. The appropriate collection and testing of these samples can only be done at a Sexual Assault Care Centre, which can be accessed at your local hospital emergency department. Police do not need to be involved to have this testing done, but if police are contacted, they will arrange for you to see a sexual assault nurse right away. The nurse will perform the necessary medico-legal examination which involves collecting samples that may aid the investigation and the prosecution of the case.

To help preserve evidence you should:

- Try not to urinate if you think you were drugged and bring any vomit sample with you to the hospital.
- Bring the cup/bottle you were drinking from to the police to be tested for the presence of drugs.
- Do not disturb physical evidence
- Do not douche or shower
- Do not wash the clothes you were wearing during the assault.

Victims of crime can call the Victim Services Branch, Hamilton Police Service at (905) 546-4904 for 24hr emotional support, information and referrals to resources in the Hamilton community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION TOPICS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA OR PLEASE CONTACT:

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE – CRIME PREVENTION

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