

DRINK SPIKING FACT SHEET

According to the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), there were more than 6,500 reports of drink spiking in 12 months in England and Wales (2022/23) and it is estimated that 1 in 10 under 25s of all orientations have been a victim of spiking. Spiking is as common at house parties as it is in bars and clubs. Be careful at festivals and if abroad too.

Drink spiking can be linked to sexual assault and robbery, however, the majority of reported incidents are not linked to any additional crime. Often it is done as a prank, but drink spiking is illegal and can have severe physical and psychological effects on victims. People who spike drinks can be charged, fined or jailed for up to 10 years.

What is drink spiking?

People might think that spiking means slipping drugs into an alcoholic drink. However, drink spiking can include:

- putting alcohol into a non-alcoholic drink
- adding extra alcohol to an alcoholic drink
- slipping prescription or illegal drugs (such as tranquillisers, amphetamines or GHB – also called liquid ecstasy) into an alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink.

How to help prevent drink spiking

- Party with trusted friends and discuss how to watch out for each other while at a venue.
- Buy your own drinks. Watch the bartender prepare your drink.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol, especially in unfamiliar situations - It could increase the likelihood of risk taking and make you less aware of danger.

- Don't accept any drinks from anyone you don't know well.
- Accompany the person to the bar if you do wish to accept the offer of a drink and take the drink from the bartender yourself.
- Be wary if someone buys you a drink and it's not the type of drink you requested.
- Don't leave your drink unsupervised or ask a trusted friend to watch it for you.
- You can buy drinks that come in bottles with screw-top lids. Carry the bottle in your bag when you go to the toilet or to dance.
- If you're suspicious a drink has been spiked, tell the venue and they will help and keep the drink as evidence to be tested. You cannot tell if a drink has been spiked by sight, smell or taste.
- Remember spiking can happen to anyone at any time or place and to any drink, so always watch out for each other
- If you are traveling abroad, be aware of the local area and where you can find help.



Symptoms of drink spiking

You may not realise your drink has been spiked by smelling it or tasting it. The substances used to spike drinks are often colourless and odourless. The symptoms of drink spiking depend on many factors such as the substance or mix of substances used, the dose, your size and weight, and how much alcohol you have already consumed.

Symptoms could include:

- feeling woozy or drowsy
- feeling drunker than expected
- speech difficulties such as slurring
- loss of inhibitions
- loss of consciousness
- mental confusion or memory loss
- hallucinations or paranoia
- nausea and vomiting
- seizures
- an unusually long hangover or a severe hangover when you had little or no alcohol to drink.

What to do if a drink is spiked

- If you suspect a drink has been spiked, whatever you do, do not ignore the situation because you feel embarrassed.
- If a friend is affected by drink spiking,
 - Take them to a safe area and stay with them. Tell the manager or host what is happening.
 - If their condition deteriorates in any way, call an ambulance (e.g., they lose consciousness). Otherwise, take them to the nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department and tell the medical staff that you think their drink was spiked.
 - Arrange for a trusted friend or relative to take them home and stay with them until the drugs have fully left their system.
- If drink spiking happens to a date, the victim is unable to consent to sex – so the perpetrator would be committing rape. Drink spiking is illegal and carries a sentence of up to ten years in prison. If a robbery, sexual assault or other criminal behaviour has taken place, the sentence will be longer.
- If someone is abroad, they can get help from a travel representative, local medical services or ask a bar or hotel manager to call local police.

Catch spikers out

- Try and keep the affected drink with you, as it could be used as evidence by the police.
- As soon as possible, report the incident to the **Police via 101** and ask for a rapid urine test. It is important that blood or urine samples are taken with some urgency as most drugs leave the body within 72 hours of being taken (GHB leaves the body more quickly). By reporting an incident to **101** it will ensure that police view CCTV footage at a bar or club and that door and bar staff know how to support someone who is spiked in future.
- Alternatively, call **Crime Stoppers** via **0800 555 111** (always anonymous).
- Speak to **Victim Support** via **0808 1689 111** (24/7) or live chat via [victimsupport.co.uk](https://www.victimsupport.co.uk)

To learn more about drink spiking and prevention and for useful clips and other resources, visit

life-stuff.org/alcohol/drink-spiking/



Needle spiking

Spiking by injection is a recent phenomenon in the UK and reports of needle spiking have escalated since 2021.

It is unclear why people might choose to spike by injection as it is difficult to conceal a needle and administer a drug in this way. It would also probably need to take place somewhere crowded, increasing the chances of being caught and a victim would need to have drunk heavily to numb any pain felt by a pin prick.

It is not known which drugs are used in needle spiking and in some cases it appears that no drugs are administered and that an attack, where a perpetrator uses an epi-pen, needle or safety pin, is more about fear and control.

Needle spiking is taken extremely seriously by the police and charges will be brought.