



Drugs Commonly Used in Sexual Assault and Rape

There are several drugs used to facilitate rape and sexual assault. In fact, over 20 have been identified. In this particular handout, we will focus on the big 4 – rohypnol, GHB, ketamine, and ecstasy. This list will not include the number 1 date rape drug – ALCOHOL. The STAR Central office has information on some of the other date rape drugs available as well as individual information sheets for each of the big 4.

Rohypnol

Brand name: flunitrazepam

Effects: disorientation, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, impaired motor skills, impaired judgment, reduced level of consciousness, lack of consciousness, memory loss; when mixed with alcohol – extremely low blood pressure, respiratory problems, coma, death

Time until intoxication: 20-30 minutes

Forms: clear liquid; round, white pills; oval green-gray pills – often seen in “bubble packs”

Taste/Odor/Appearance: may cause drinks to turn blue or cloudy, bitter taste, otherwise none

Slang/Street Names: roofies, ruffies, roach, R2, rib, rope, la rochas, forget pill, poor man’s quaalude, whiteys, trip-and-fall, mind erasers, Mexican valium, lunch money (refers to low street price)

Testing method: urinalysis

Time detected in system: 24 hours is the maximum; however, some labs checking for metabolites of this drug can detect them up to 72 hours after ingestion

Other Items of Note: It is illegal to manufacture, distribute, and possess rohypnol in the US.

Counterfeit tablets have been found and confiscated. The drug sells for as little as \$1-\$5 per pill.

GHB

Brand name: gamma-hydroxybutyrate

Effects: disorientation, confusion, dizziness, intense drowsiness, euphoria, nausea, seizures, respiratory depression, incontinence, reduced level of consciousness, lack of consciousness; when mixed with alcohol – extremely low blood pressure, respiratory problems, coma, death

Time until intoxication: 15-20 minutes

Forms: clear liquid; round, white pills; white powder

Taste/Odor/Appearance: often odorless and tasteless; can produce a salty taste in some drinks

Slang/Street Names: grievous bodily harm, Georgia home boy, liquid X, liquid E, liquid ecstasy, easy lay, scoop, somatomax, vita G, G juice, great hormones, soap, gook, gamma 10, energy drink

Testing method: urinalysis

Time detected in system: usually clears the system in 4-6 hours; however, some metabolites can be detected in urine up to 24 hours after ingestion

Other Items of Note: A small amount can have a big effect. Much of the GHB in the US is “homemade” by people who have significant differences in purity, concentration, and potency of batches. It is easy to cause an overdose. The salty taste is often concealed in sweet or fruity drinks or offered as a “health” or “energy” drink.

Ketamine

Brand name: ketamine

Effects: disorientation, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, impaired motor skills, hallucinations, agitation, high blood pressure, reduced level of consciousness, detached consciousness (aware of what's happening, but unable to move), depression, amnesia

Time until intoxication: rapid if injected – 10-15 seconds; 2-30 minutes commonly listed

Forms: clear liquid; powder

Taste/Odor/Appearance: none noted

Slang/Street Names: K, special K, vitamin K, black hole, bump, jet, K-hole, kit kat, psychedelic heroin, purple

Testing method: urinalysis and blood test

Time detected in system: actual maximum times are unknown, but metabolites can be detected 7-14 days in both blood and urine

Other Items of Note: Ketamine is especially dangerous when combined with alcohol. Seizure-like activity is often seen.

Ecstasy

Brand name: 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)

Effects: increased pulse, increased blood pressure, increased body temperature nausea, chills, sweating, hallucinations, tremors, blurred vision, loss of consciousness, stroke, seizures, extreme decreased awareness

Time until intoxication: 20-60 minutes

Forms: tablet, capsule, powder, liquid (less common)

Taste/Odor/Appearance: none noted – although many manufacturers place a logo on the pills (butterflies, clovers, etc)

Slang/Street Names: E, X, X-TC, hug drug, Adam, CK, clarity, lover's speed, M&M's

Testing method: urinalysis

Time detected in system: approximately 2-4 days

Other Items of Note: Use in hot, crowded environments can cause dehydration, heat stroke, heart failure, and death. It can enhance your sense of touch and make you have positive feelings for others thereby taking away your sense of danger, leaving you unable to protect yourself from a potential rapist.

Information adapted from the Rape Treatment Center of Santa Monica and UCLA Medical Center and ElSohly Laboratories, Inc., Oxford, MS

STAR Central – Office of Support, Training, Advocacy, & Resources on Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence
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