

# Facts About Sexual Assault

- Sexual assault is a sexual act carried out without a person's consent. It can include sexual intercourse, oral or anal sex, or penetration or intrusion by any body part or object.<sup>1</sup> Touching without consent is considered unlawful sexual contact and is also a crime in Colorado.<sup>2</sup> Unlawful sexual contact is defined as the knowing touching of intimate body parts (clothed or unclothed) without consent, or coerced touching of the perpetrator's body parts for the purpose of sexual arousal.
- Consent cannot be given if a person is drunk, unconscious, asleep, frightened, or unable to participate.<sup>3</sup>
- Sexual assault is common. In Colorado, one in four women and one in seventeen men have experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault.<sup>4</sup>
- Most sexual assaults are committed by someone the person knows.<sup>5</sup>
- At least 50 percent of college student sexual assaults are associated with alcohol use.<sup>6</sup>
- Sexual assault and unlawful sexual contact are never the victim's fault. Having your guard down does not give another person permission to hurt you. The perpetrator is always responsible for the crime; never the victim.

1120 Lincoln St.  
Suite 700  
Denver, CO 80203  
303-839-9999  
[www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org)



For more information about sexual assault, contact your local center:

WHAT HAPPENED?

DRUG-FACILITATED SEXUAL ASSAULT

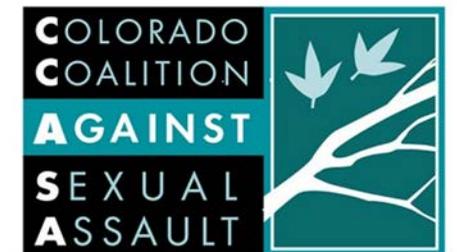
## Understanding What Happened

- If you are a victim of drug-facilitated sexual assault, you are not alone. A May 2006 study found that 62% of sexual assaults were found to be drug-facilitated.<sup>9</sup>
- Perpetrators of sexual assault tend to manipulate, coerce and/or isolate a potential victim.
- It is so common for some boys/men to encourage a woman to drink heavily in order to have sex, that many people do not recognize this as a crime.
- Perpetrators often target someone who can easily be "carried" or taken home by posing as "the rescuer or the helper."
- The perpetrator could be a date, neighbor, partner, acquaintance, stranger, or a trusted "friend."
- People who use drugs to facilitate sexual assault may work in pairs. One person might place the drug in someone's drink, while the second person arrives as the drug is taking effect.
- Using drugs to facilitate sexual assault increases the penalty for the crime.<sup>10</sup>

This project was supported by Grant No. 2010-SW-AX-0029 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

### Footnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 18-3-402: Sexual assault
- <sup>2</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 18-3-403: Unlawful sexual contact
- <sup>3</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 18-3-402: Sexual assault
- <sup>4</sup> Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment & Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 1998.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. 2005 National Crime Victimization Study, 2005.
- <sup>6</sup> Abbey, 1991, 2002; Abbey et al., 1996, 1998; Copenhaver and Grauerholz, 1991; Harrington and Leitenberg, 1994; Koss, 1992; Koss et al., 1987; Miller and Marshal, 1987; Muehlenhard and Linton, 1987; Presley et al., 1997; Tyler et al., 1998.
- <sup>7</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 18-3-407.5 (1): Costs associated with the collection of forensic evidence.
- <sup>8</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 24-4.1: Crime Victim Rights
- <sup>9</sup> University of Illinois at Chicago, Sam Hostettler.
- <sup>10</sup> Colorado Revised Statute, 18-13-123 (3): Unlawful use of GHB and Ketamine.



FREEDOM FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE

# What Is Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault?

Alcohol and drugs can be used to weaken a person for a period of time and cause memory loss. Alcohol is the number one “drug” used with sexual assault. It is sometimes used to “loosen up” a date or a friend to make them submit to sexual advances. Besides alcohol, there are other drugs that can make someone vulnerable to a sexual assault. These drugs may be slipped into a drink or the perpetrator may choose to assault someone who has taken drugs for fun. As a result, the person’s memory may be damaged, causing them to ask “What happened?”

## What are the most common drugs?

While alcohol is the most common drug used by perpetrators to facilitate sexual assault, other drugs may also be used. Some drugs have no taste, color, or smell. They may also easily dissolve in liquid or be in liquid form. After ingestion, effects can occur very fast. The drugs described below are often called “date rape drugs” because they quickly increase a person’s vulnerability to sexual assault.

## What if I used or alcohol for fun?

Choosing to drink alcohol and/or take drugs does not mean you consented to have sex. While we all have responsibility for our behavior, no one is responsible for a crime that someone else commits.

Having sex with someone who is unable to consent after drinking or using drugs is a crime.

# Commonly Used Drugs and Their Effects

- **GHB:** Found in clear liquid or white powder form. The liquid has a slight salty taste. It causes intense drowsiness, disorientation and coma.
- **Ketamine:** Used as a liquid veterinary and human anesthetic. The street form may be liquid or powder. It can produce vivid hallucinations, paranoia, sensory distortions, muscle rigidity, and loss of pain perception. Other name: *Special K*.
- **Rohypnol:** Found as a small white or a long dark green pill, it causes light colored drinks to turn blue. It’s 10 times stronger than Valium. It causes sleepiness, decreases in blood pressure and breathing, and memory loss. Other name: *Roofy*.
- According to medical professionals in Colorado, some over-the-counter medications and commonly prescribed drugs can cause extreme sleepiness and make someone more vulnerable to sexual assault.

# Emotional Effects

Feelings of guilt, confusion, depression, fear, anxiety, denial, helplessness and betrayal are common reactions to sexual violence.

Victims of drug-induced sexual assault often have additional responses, including (but not limited to):

- Partial or complete memory loss of the situation.
- Memories of being helpless to stop the assault.
- Undirected anger, guilt, a sense of helplessness, uncertainty, and tremendous anxiety.
- Self-blame or self-doubt.

Counseling and support can help reduce the long-term effects of sexual assault. Finding a counselor who specializes in sexual assault issues may help with healing. Many victims report feeling better when talking with others or a trained professional.



What to do if you suspect you've been drugged and assaulted:

## Trust Yourself

It is hard to know what to do about something when you can't fully remember what happened. Trust what your instincts are telling you and seek help.

## Get Medical Attention

If you are ill or injured, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for treatment. Tell the medical provider that you suspect you may have been assaulted while under the influence. Whether or not you are ill or physically injured, consider getting medical attention. Medical care should include testing for pregnancy and preventative treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Law enforcement or the Division of Criminal Justice will pay for the forensic exam<sup>7</sup> and you may be eligible for victims' compensation, which includes counseling.<sup>8</sup>

## Think About Law Enforcement

If you choose to report the incident to law enforcement, do not delay. Call the police first, and then go to the hospital to have the medical exam.

## Preserve Evidence

Try not to shower, change clothes, or brush your teeth. Your urine can be tested for drugs. Some drugs can only be found in the urine for 12 hours to 72 hours later. The sooner you get to the hospital, the more likely it can be that the drug will be found. A drug-facilitated sexual assault may still have occurred even if you get a negative test result.