



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local Newspaper
From: Lorrie Youngs, Health Education Supervisor
Subject: Sexual Assault and Date Rape Drugs
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Sexual Assault and Date Rape Drugs

Sexual assault and abuse is defined as any type of sexual activity that you do not agree to, including inappropriate touching, vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Sexual assault can include verbal, visual, or anything that forces a person to join in with unwanted sexual contact or attention.

It is widely publicized that the perpetrators use drugs to debilitate the persons they assault. The most common and prevalent date rape drug, alcohol, is not readily recognized as a threat. In fact, almost half of the sexual assaults take place under the influence of alcohol. The use of date rape drugs incapacitate their victim and ensure that she/he will not be able to resist the assault. In addition, it assures the perpetrator that the survivor will not recall details about the assault to prosecute.

Alcohol, the most common date rape drug, is a depressant that slows the activity of the central nervous system. Alcohol is easy to use because it is legal and socially accepted. Rohypnol is a well known date rape drug, also known as "roofies," or "the forget pill". It is legally sold in Europe and Latin America as a sleep aid, but is illegal in North America. Its effects on the body vary depending on the dosage that one is given, but they range from sedation to coma. Rohypnol is a pill and dissolves in liquid. New pills will turn the liquid blue; however the old pills, with no color are still available. After consumption it takes 20 – 30 minutes before sedation effects occur, and the effects can last up to 8-24 hours. When it's mixed with

alcohol it is even more dangerous because it can even lead to death. Rohypnol stays in the body for several hours and can be detected in the urine up to 72 hours after taking it.

Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) comes in the form of liquid with no odor or color, white powder, and pills. Some weightlifters use it for muscle growth. It is inexpensive and easy to make, the components that make up GHB can be purchased in health food stores or over the internet. GHB takes up to 15-20 minutes to begin sedative effects and can last for a couple hours. GHB is undetectable after 12 hours of ingesting.

Ketamine is an anesthetic, used primarily with animals for anesthetic purposes. It is legal in the United States for this purpose. When humans ingest the white powder it results in a state of intoxication that renders the person unable to move, feel pain, or remember what took place. The effects last 30-60 minutes, and can be accompanied by hallucinations. If a drug induced sexual assault takes place or is suspected, it is important to get some form of medical attention to test for sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and if possible to determine if a drug was used. Nurses who examine and treat survivors who report being sexually assaulted, have been specially trained to be sensitive to the needs of survivors. A physical exam is performed to look for and treat injuries, and can collect evidence for future legal prosecution if the survivor chooses to pursue this. You can protect yourself from being a victim by following these tips:

- Don't accept drinks from others
- Open containers yourself
- Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom
- Don't share drinks
- Don't drink from punch bowls or other large, common, open containers
- Don't drink anything that tastes or smells strange
- Have a non-drinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens
- If you think that you have been drugged and raped, go to the emergency room right away

- Get a urine test as soon as possible
- Don't urinate before getting help
- Don't bathe or change clothes before getting help
- You can also call a crisis center or hotline to talk with a counselor

For crisis help in Arenac County residents should call Bay Area Women's Center at 800-834-2098.

Clare County residents should call Listening Ear at (989) 386-2774 or Women's Aid at (989) 539-1046.

Gladwin County residents should call Shelter House/Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at (989) 835-6771 or 887-216-6383.

Isabella County, call Listening Ear at (989) 772-2918, Women's Aid at (989) 772-9168 or Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Behavioral Health Program at (989) 775-4850.

Osceola County residents should call WISE at (231) 796-6600 or 800-734-WISE.

Roscommon County residents should call River House Shelter at (989) 348-3169 or 888-554-3169.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the local residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties.

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Sources: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

<http://www.4women.gov/faq/rohypnol.htm>

University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre

Medscape Today

www.medscape.com

<http://stopviolence.com/rape.htm>