

Health and Wellness:

Date Rape Prevention

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A little known fact about the majority of rape cases is that the perpetrator is not a stranger. It is important to learn as much as possible to be safe. While no guideline or article can prevent a rape, following certain precautions greatly reduces the risk of assault.

Here are some recommendations:



1. Your Drink:

- a. Setting aside the illegal aspects of alcohol by a minor, if you do drink, limit yourself to one and no more than two drinks to avoid being publicly intoxicated. Alcohol reduces awareness making the victim more vulnerable.
- b. A perpetrator can add a date rape drug such as rohypnol (“roofies”), gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and ketamine to an alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage. These tasteless and odorless drugs, which are easily mixed into drinks while you are not looking, produce an altered state of consciousness.
- c. Do not drink from communal containers such as punch bowls. In summary, it is necessary to **always** keep your eye on every beverage you drink. This includes drinking it before you go to the bathroom or even bringing it with you.



2. Safety First:

- a. Keep personal information away from new acquaintances. Such information includes your location, mobile number, address, daily schedule and when you are alone.
- b. The first few dates should always be in a public place. Never allow your date to go to your home until you have known them for a while. Some people strategize to innocuously use the bathroom or just be invited in for a glass of water. Act smart.
- c. Uncomfortable feelings say a lot. Call a cab, friend/relative or find another safe way to get home.
- d. Until you know someone well enough, do not enter their home or hotel room, and don't allow them to follow you to your home. Keep your address/room number safe. Removing yourself from a situation once you are in a private room can be very precarious.
- e. Should you be in a restaurant, nightclub or hotel alone, do not hesitate to request someone escort you to your car.
- f. Friends need to watch out for each other. This includes everyone doing their best to arrive together, check in with each other during the outing and leave together. No one should take your friend somewhere without first checking that friend is okay. Hopefully your friend will not appear high or intoxicated, but if he/she does, bring them to a safe place immediately.
- g. Someone should always know who you are going with and what's on the agenda.

3. Clearly Communicate Your Relationship Boundaries:

- a. Some people receive communications incorrectly. Passivity is sometimes interpreted as interested. If you are being pursued by someone but uninterested, make sure to establish clear relationship boundaries.
- b. Never be alone with someone who ignores your personal boundaries.
- c. Regardless of how long you've known someone, if he/she ignores your personal boundaries, it's time to be assertive. You have the right to curtail any behavior with which you are uncomfortable, regardless of your attraction to the other person or prior behaviors with this person.
- d. Be wary of anyone who repeatedly negates your feelings: (e.g., “You don't believe that” or “You really can't feel that way”).

4. You Are Not Obligated To Do Anything: No one should feel obligated to engage in any behavior (including kissing) simply because the other party paid for drinks/dinner/entertainment. This includes after any particular number of dates. People who subscribe to that mentality are not worthy of any further dates.

Additional Resources

This is a very cursory overview on this topic. To learn more, here are a few links to get you started:

- (1) <http://www.wikihow.com/Prevent-Date-Rape>
- (2) http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/relationships/date_rape.html
- (3) <http://www.webmd.com/women/sexual-health-rape-date-rape>

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