

Avoiding the Problems

The earlier sections of this brochure discussed what to do after finding yourself in a bad situation. It is better to avoid problems in the first place. The first advice:

“Keep your friends close and your drinks closer.”

“Keep your friends close” means that friends can keep an eye on each other, and may be able to intervene if they notice unusual circumstances. At the very least they might be able to identify a suspect if a crime occurs.

“Keep your drinks closer” means never allowing someone else to handle your drinks. Especially do not accept a drink from someone you don't know unless it was handed to you directly by the bartender. Also, do not allow drinks to sit unattended for even a moment.

Remember that the effects of drugs may happen very quickly, so there may not be time for you to personally take control of the situation once the effects begin to appear.

If you suddenly feel unwell or more intoxicated than you would expect for the amount of alcohol you have consumed, tell a friend or a member of the bar or security staff immediately. Ask them to look after your safety in the short term.

- ***Find Someone You Know:** If you are at the bar, club, or party with a trusted friend, have them escort you home and stay with you until you recover sufficiently.
- ***Ask the Staff:** If you are alone at the bar/club, ask the bar or security staff for a safe place to recover i.e. managers office, staff room etc.
- ***Get into a Cab:** Once sufficiently recovered, have someone from the bar staff help you into a taxi. Never get into a cab with someone you don't know, even if they claim to be helping.
- ***Get Medical Help:** If you have concerns about your wellbeing, have the staff call for medical assistance. Some clubs have their own emergency medical staff, or have them call 911.

Clubbing Should Be Safe & Fun

*Take Care of Yourself; Take Care of Your Friends;
Take Care of Your Neighbors.*



“Stop the Violence” is a joint project of Castro Patrol, The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and Community Patrol USA.

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I think I've been “Roofied”



You wake up. You don't recognize your location, even though you may later realize it's your own home. The details of what happened are sketchy—how you ended up here, who you were with, what took place and whether it was consensual. You may conclude that you have been “roofied”¹.

What should you do if you think you've been drugged and possibly the victim of a crime? First, try to piece together the events that led to your current circumstances. Talk with someone who can help sort through the facts. Finally, if anything points to criminal intent, call the police and make sure you keep any and all possible evidence.

Moving From Panic to Analysis

Don't jump to conclusions. Many “roofie” events turn out to be non-criminal. In fact, many are self-inflicted², and what may at first appear to be a crime turns out to be an evening that started out fun and ended up in a blackout. Try to move to a position of greater safety. Calmly think through what happened. Have conversations with friends who might be able to fill in details. Then collect evidence if there is a possibility a crime occurred.

You may find yourself in one of the three following scenarios: 1) Persons unknown to you, 2) Situations involving friends, and 3) Actions caused by you. Each might turn out to be innocent or malicious, so do your best to put the pieces together.

Incidents Involving Strangers

The first scenario can be the most frightening because you do not know the persons involved. The three realizations that should raise concern are:

- ***Waking In an Unknown Location:** Waking in the home of a stranger can be concerning. Waking in a street or alley may be riskier. Be cautious; especially if there are signs of a robbery and/or unwanted sexual activity. Keep yourself safe, even if that means seeking help from an open business or moving to a street location with light and visibility.



¹ When someone spikes your drink with a drug without your knowledge. Effects include vomiting, loss of co-ordination and cognitive abilities, as well as coma induction. *John got roofied the other night!* (www.urbandictionary.com definition #1)

² When you get so drunk that someone might as well have spiked your drink. *Yeah man, I don't remember anything...I was roofied!* (www.urbandictionary.com definition #2)

***Possible Sexual Assault:** Sexual contact with someone incapable of giving informed consent is a form of rape. Check for signs of unwanted sexual contact, such as pain or blood in your sexual areas, body fluids on beds or furniture, soiled towels, or used condoms. If these signs exist, call the police right away and tell them that you may have been assaulted to make sure evidence is preserved. You can always call them later if the event turns out to be innocent.

***Stolen Property:** If you find property missing, like a phone, computer, wallet or bankcard, there is a high probability a crime occurred. Again call the police as soon as possible.

“Help” from a friend

The second scenario may not have the urgency of a stranger-caused event, but can be equally as frightening when you first regain consciousness. Others at the party might take your loss of control as permission to take advantage. Here are likely causes of your distress:

***Over-pouring drinks:** Your friends may have wanted to “help” you have a better time by serving “doubles” without your knowledge. You may find yourself more intoxicated than you planned, including passing out or going into blackout (where you might remain conscious but have no memory of events).

***Enhancing Alcohol Content:** You may mix your own drinks, but the host might spike the wine or replace vodka (40% alcohol) with Everclear® (95% alcohol). You consume twice the alcohol you planned. Alcohol takes a time to metabolize, so you find yourself overly intoxicated well after you consumed the drinks.

***Addition of “Party” Drugs:** Someone might add a drug to a drink or food item for added fun. Spiking of drinks or food with LSD, MDMA (“Molly” or ecstasy), GHB, etc could suddenly put you into a state of hallucination or unconsciousness.

“Self-inflicted” Situations

The third scenario involves unexpected interactions of substances. Again, the result might be a sudden loss of control or consciousness. Others at the event might not realize that you are beyond the level of informed consent unless a friend or concerned stranger checks on your wellbeing.

***Reactions with Prescriptions Drugs:** Certain drugs greatly amplify the impact of even a few drinks, causing nausea, lowered ability to reason, or loss of consciousness. Examples are certain antibiotics, painkillers, psychotropic drugs for depression or sleep issues, etc. These drugs may remain in your system more than 24 hours after your last dosage, so days later a drink or two may cause you to lose control.

***ED Drugs with Extenuating Circumstances:** Erectile Dysfunction drugs such as Viagra® or Cialis® can lead to dangerous conditions because they reduce blood pressure. Additional events that further lower blood pressure (for example extended time in a steam room or hot tub) or combining with another agent that lowers blood pressure (such as “poppers”

or other nitrates used to treat heart conditions) can cause you to pass out or at least be in a vulnerable state.

***Party Drugs:** One of the biggest problems with street drugs is the lack of quality control. You may have an even track record with a certain drug or drugs from a selected supplier, but suddenly find that a recent purchase causes extreme side effects. It is important that at least one of your friends knows what drugs you have taken and at least a general description of their source, just in case you suddenly find yourself in a bad situation.

When a Crime is Suspected

If you think that a crime occurred while you were incapacitated, you should do the following:

***File a Police Report:** Call or have a trusted friend call the police as soon as possible. If the suspect is still near by or if you have any life-threatening conditions, dial 911. If the person is gone (even if you have property missing) use the non-emergency number (415-553-0123). In either case, ask the dispatcher for the CAD or case number and write it down immediately after describing the circumstances. This allows you to tie your report to any investigation later.

***Preserve Evidence:** If anything suggests that there was unwanted sexual contact:

★**Do not shower:** Try to preserve all DNA evidence, which includes any that may still be on your skin or inside your body.

★**Bag your clothes:** You may want to wear some clean clothes, but take any clothes that you were wearing and place them inside a clean garbage bag. Bring them with you to the emergency room.

***Get to an Emergency Room:** Bring your bagged clothes and the CAD or case number with you. Drive if you are able, ask a friend to drive you, or ask for an ambulance if you are injured. When you get to the ER:

★**Ask for a blood draw or urine test:** Traces of drugs leave your body quickly, so get to the hospital as soon as possible. Do not be concerned if you have taken drugs voluntarily; the drug test is to prove crimes *against* you, not crimes *by* you.

★**If there was sexual contact:** Tell the staff that you may have been sexually assaulted and ask that they collect evidence in a “rape kit”.

★**Discuss your HIV status:** The medical staff might suggest HIV prevention drugs if appropriate.

***Follow Up with the Police:** After things have calmed, follow up with the police to find out the status of your case. Use the CAD or case number to tie all of the information together. If you feel that you are not getting the attention you need, contact the District Attorney’s Victim Services Unit at 415-553-9044 and/or work with a community organization such as the Castro Community on Patrol (e-mail details to: info@castropatrol.org).