



SPIKING FACT SHEET

- Spiking is when someone administers a legal or illegal substance to a person without their knowledge or consent - this can be via drinks, vapes and sometimes food such as brownies or sweets. It can include putting alcohol into a non-alcoholic drink or slipping prescription or illegal drugs (such as GHB, GBL, MDMA or Ket) into a drink. Vapes have been found to be spiked with Spice, MDMA, GBL and Xylazine, spiking of any form is a criminal offence and can result in up to 10 years in prison.
- It is hard to tell whether a drink/ food/ vape has been spiked, as substances used for spiking usually have no smell or colour. Spiking is estimated to affect one in 10 under 25's, and there were 6,500 spiking reports to the police in England and Wales 2022/23), including vape and spiking by injection as well as drink spiking.

Drink Spiking

Any place

- Spiking is as common at house parties as it is in bars and clubs. Be careful at festivals and if abroad too.

Anyone

- Young women and the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to be victims of spiking, but everyone should be vigilant and look out for their mates too.

Any drink

- Remember any drink can be spiked
- Spiking can be linked to sexual assault or robbery, but most cases are not linked to any additional crime.
- Spiking of any kind is illegal and can result to up to 10 years in prison, so anyone thinking of giving someone a legal or legal drug/substance without their consent faces prosecution and a criminal record.

How to help prevent drink spiking

- Party with trusted friends and discuss how to watch out for each other while out. Take your own drinks to parties or socials
- Make sure your phone is fully charged and you have a locator on such as snapchat or findmyfriends.
- Don't give out your address/ number to someone you've just met.
- Make plans for your journey home, if possible before you head out.
- Where possible adults should buy their own drinks or only accept drinks from trusted friends. Watching staff prepare drinks and taking them directly from staff can help.
- Avoid drinking too much alcohol or using any substance, especially in unfamiliar situations - It could increase vulnerability and make someone less aware of danger. Stay hydrated and eat!
- Accompany any person you don't know well to the bar if you do wish to accept a drink and take the drink from the bartender yourself.
- Be wary if someone buys a drink and it's not the type of drink you requested.
- Don't leave drinks unsupervised or ask a trusted friend to watch it for you.
- You can buy drinks that come in bottles with screw-top lids. Carry the bottle in your bag when you go to the toilet or to dance.
- Remember that spiking is common at private parties, not just bars and clubs and that any drink can be spiked alcoholic or not.
- If you're suspicious a drink has been spiked, tell the venue and they will help and keep the drink as evidence to be tested.



- Spiking can't be detected by sight, smell or taste and can happen to anyone at any time or place and to any drink, so always watch out for each other.
- If you are traveling abroad, be aware of the local area and where you can get help.

Other spiking - vapes needles and food

- A third of vapes on sale are illegal, so beware of trying other people's vapes or accepting a free one. If buying a vape check the label, legal max strength is 20mg/ml or 2% and max tank size 2ml. If this isn't the case, it is illegal and anything can be in it.
- Needle spiking ('injection spiking') is where someone injects a victim with a substance without their consent or knowledge.
- Spiking by injection Reports of needle spiking have grown since 2021. It is unclear why people might choose to spike by injection as it is difficult to conceal a needle and administer a drug in this way. It would also probably need to take place somewhere crowded, increasing the chances of being caught and a victim would need to have drunk heavily to numb any pain felt by a pin prick.
- It is not known which drugs are used in needle spiking and in some cases it appears that no drugs are administered and that an attack is more about fear and control. Needle spiking is a criminal offence and can result in 10 years in prison.



Spiking – how do I know?

- You can't tell from the smell or taste if a drink has been spiked, the ice doesn't sink either. It's not always easy to spot the signs and symptoms of spiking either because they're similar to being very drunk, so never presume someone is drunk if their behaviour changes, take them to a safe space and ask for help
- Signs include confusion, black out or passing out, nausea or being sick, A sudden change in behaviour (e.g., Being okay then seeming extremely drunk very quickly), difficulty speaking, problems with balance, movement and coordination, hallucinations & paranoia.
- Often it won't be until the next day that someone will realise what has happened, reporting it as soon as possible is key to ensure a rapid urine or blood test and for any evidence to be found.

What to do if someone is spiked

- It can be difficult to recognise the symptoms, whatever you do, do not ignore the situation because you feel embarrassed. If a friend is affected by spiking take them to a safe area and stay with them.
- If their condition deteriorates in any way, call an ambulance (e.g., they lose consciousness)
- Arrange for a trusted friend or relative to take them home and stay with them until the drugs have fully left their system. Hospitals do not test for spiking, only the police will do this, so report it as soon as possible via 101, they will test up to 7 days after an incident.
- Being spiked can be very traumatic and Victim Support are available 365 days a year 24/7 via 0808 1689 111 (24/7) or live chat via [victimsupport.co.uk](https://www.victimsupport.co.uk).
- If anyone is worried they have been sexually assaulted they can receive confidential specialist support via Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC). To find a local SARC See rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/sexual-assault-referral-centres-sarcs/ for England or nhs.uk/inform-scot/SARCS for Scotland or executive.nhs.wales/networks/programmes/wsas/access-a-sarc/ for Wales.

Catch spikers out

- Try and keep the affected drink, vape or food as it could be used as evidence by the police.
- As soon as possible, report the incident to the Police via 101, online or using the app Police. UK and ask for a rapid urine test. It is important that blood or urine samples are taken with some urgency as most drugs leave the body within 72 hours of being taken (GHB and GBL leave the body more quickly).
- By reporting an incident to the police it will ensure that they view CCTV footage at a bar or club and that door and bar staff know how to support someone who is spiked in future. Alternatively, call Crime Stoppers via 0800 555 111 (always anonymous).
- To learn more about spiking and prevention and for useful clips and other resources, visit life-stuff.org/alcohol/drink-spiking/

