

Protect yourself from

# Date Rape

By Stacey Shackford

# Drugs

When a 19-year-old, testifying against the four men accused in the date rape drug assault of her friend, Rebecca Reid.

**Y**ou know not to walk across campus alone after dark, to lock your door before going to bed, to call for a ride if you're too drunk to drive. You may even be armed with pepper spray.

But chances are you underestimate the danger of another, more stealthy predator.

Rebecca\* did.

The 19-year-old University of Massachusetts student awoke in her dorm room after a party one night, naked from the waist down. Though Rebecca had no clear memory of what happened the night before, bits and pieces came back to her.

Watching a movie with her friend Liz and two male friends; dancing and playing drinking games; tending to Liz when she suddenly became violently ill; ending the party; saying good-bye to one of the guys. It's what happened next that Rebecca couldn't recall, a memory lapse that led her to fear the worst, suspicions that were confirmed by a doctor's exam the next day. Rebecca had been raped.

Police believe Rebecca and Liz were given a dose of "roofies," a drug widely known to reduce inhibitions and cause amnesia.

Once popular in the party scene for their hangover-free high, a 2 mg dose of drugs like Rohypnol, Ketamine or GHB can cause disorientation and confusion within 15-20 minutes. The symptoms are often mistaken for extreme alcohol intoxication—drowsiness, dizziness, lack of muscle coordination and nausea. One dose can cause a person to blank out for up to eight hours, and an overdose can kill you.

Use of the drugs to facilitate sexual assault has become so common that they have become known as "date rape drugs." Their list of nicknames is a long one—roofies, forget pill, mind erasers, liquid ecstasy, grievous bodily harm and easy lay, to name a few.

Rebecca is only one of hundreds of suspected victims nationwide. In Virginia, two 15-year-old girls were raped using Rohypnol when they went to visit a friend. Joy Diliello of Jackson, Tenn. was

raped by a man who slipped her Rohypnol. He reportedly boasted about attacks on 20 other women.

Roofie overdoses have killed more than 66 people, one of them a 16-year-old Michigan girl named Samantha Reid, who drank a Mountain Dew spiked with GHB (see [GHBkills.com](http://GHBkills.com) for more on GHB).

Her death inspired the Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act, which puts GHB and Ketamine in the same class as cocaine and heroin in terms of possession and distribution.

The government has an emergency drug alert info site at [emergency.com/roofies.htm](http://emergency.com/roofies.htm), and a club drugs site, [clubdrugs.org](http://clubdrugs.org).

Because college women are particularly susceptible to the dangers of date rape drugs, which are commonly used in bars or at large parties, many campuses have issued warnings about the drugs.

Despite heightened awareness about date rape drugs, successful prosecution of rapes involving the drug is rare. All traces of these drugs leave the body in under 72 hours, and an uncertain, confused victim doesn't always make it to the hospital for a drug screening immediately after a suspected rape.

Rebecca's perpetrator went to trial but was acquitted because all drug related evidence was ruled inadmissible by the judge. Simply put, she had no proof that she'd been slipped a roofie.

Experts advise women to never leave drinks unattended at a party or bar, and to avoid drinks purchased by strangers.

If you believe you may have been the victim of a drugging, visit the British Roofie Foundation at [faze.com/trf](http://faze.com/trf) or the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services site at [connacs.org/rohypnol.htm](http://connacs.org/rohypnol.htm) for advice about what you should and should not do and the legal hurdles you may have to face. •

*\*name changed to protect identity of the victim*

For a guide to online support groups and emergency information go to [steamtunnels.net](http://steamtunnels.net) and search for keyword "Support."

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## How to Avoid Being the Victim of a Date Rape Drug

1. Never leave an open drink unattended.
2. Don't let strangers buy you a drink.
3. Open your own bottles or watch a bartender open them for you.
4. Don't drink from communal punch bowls—they could be spiked.
5. Be wary of strangers who come up close to you while you're holding a drink—pills can be easily dropped into a glass when you're looking away.

A homemade manufacturing kit for the date rape drug GHB or gamma hydroxybutyric acid, available on an Internet site.

