Alcohol, Drugs and Rape

Using alcohol and/or drugs may increase the risk of acquaintance rape. In most acquaintance rape cases, both people had been drinking and/or using drugs.

At least 2 drugs have become known as "date rape" drugs. **Rohypnol** ("roofies," "rophies," "Roche") and **Gamma-hydroxybutyrate acid** ("GHB") have similar effects. Both cause sleep and amnesia-like symptoms. The ability to remember is impaired even more when these drugs are taken with alcohol and/or other drugs.

To avoid the possibility of being drugged, do not accept drinks from strangers or casual acquaintances, and never leave a drink unattended.
What Is Acquaintance Rape?

Acquaintance rape occurs when a woman is forced to have sexual activity against her will by someone she knows. The rapist may be a friend, date, neighbor, partner or husband.

Most rape victims are women, but men can also be raped. Anyone who is forced to have unwanted sex by a friend, relative, partner or another acquaintance is a rape victim.

But because rape usually happens to women, this pamphlet refers to female victims and male offenders.

Am I at Risk?

Any woman is at risk for acquaintance rape regardless of her age, race, education level or socioeconomic status.
- 1 in 6 women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime.
- 65% of sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance.
- About every 2 minutes, somewhere in America, a woman is sexually assaulted.

Be Clear

Many people believe that acquaintance rape sometimes results from miscommunication about sex that's based on some old patterns:
- In the past, women have been expected to say no at first, even when they intended to have sex with someone.
- Therefore, some men may believe a woman means yes, even when she says no.

To overcome potential misunderstandings, both partners need to know their sexual desires and limits. And both need to express these limits clearly to each other.

Warning Signs

There are warning signs that a man may be a potential rapist. Not all men with these characteristics are rapists.

Many acquaintance rapists:
- See their actions as seduction, not rape.
- See women as sex objects and do not respect them.
- Resent women in positions of authority.
- Often invade women's personal space.
- Continue to touch a woman even when asked to stop.
- See aggression and violence as normal behavior.
- Expect relationships with women to be on their terms.

If You're in Danger

If you are in immediate danger of being raped, the following suggestions may help:
- **Try to stay calm.** It will be easier to think clearly.
- **Be assertive.** Pleading or crying is not likely to help.
- **Use active resistance.** Try fighting, screaming or running away, if possible.
- **Use passive resistance.** Say that you have a sexually transmitted disease, such as herpes or HIV.
- **Trust your feelings** about the situation you are in. Submission may be the best way to avoid more serious injury.

Reducing the Risk

Rape cannot always be prevented. But there may be things you can do to reduce the risk of rape before you get into a sexual situation.

For Men
- Know your sexual desires and limits.
- Communicate your desires and limits clearly.
- Don't assume a woman wants to have sex because she is attracted or has been drinking.
- Listen to what a woman says. Accept her sexual limits and assume that she means what she says.
- Don't take being rejected for sex as being rejected as a person.
- Avoid excessive drinking and drug use.

For Women
- Know your sexual desires and limits.
- Communicate your desires and limits clearly.
- If you are feeling uncomfortable in a situation, pay attention to the feeling and do something about it.
- Be alert for any warning signs.
- Avoid excessive drinking and drug use.
Women and Rape

Women who have been raped may feel ashamed. Guilt and self-blame are also common. Women often feel they were somehow responsible, or that they should have been able to prevent the rape.

Depression is common after acquaintance rape and may interfere with the person's daily routine. The rape may also affect the way she feels about men.

Many women never tell anyone. They may not realize that being forced to have sex by someone they know is indeed rape.

Many women think that if they know the rapist, it can't be rape.

Family, Partners and Friends

It's hard to tell how family, partners and friends will react. Many people don't consider it rape if a victim knows the rapist. Because of this, they sometimes blame the person who is raped.

If you know someone who has been raped:

- Support her by listening to her, believing her and taking her seriously.
- Do not judge her actions as right or wrong.
- Encourage her to seek help from qualified rape counselors.
- Support her decision of whether or not to report the rape to police.
- Offer to go with her to a hospital, police station or rape crisis center if she wants to go.

If You're Raped...

Don't blame yourself — you are the victim of a crime.
Seek help from someone. Your physical health and well-being are important.

Seek medical help. You may be at risk for sexually transmitted disease and/or pregnancy. Also, medical evidence will be needed if you decide to press charges against the rapist.

Talk to someone trained to help.
Family members, partners and friends may not always understand or support you.

These people can help:

- Counselors at women's centers, sexual assault centers or school counseling centers.
- Rape hotlines.
- Emergency room staff, doctors or nurses.
- Police trained to help rape victims.