To Prevent Regrets, Drink Responsibly

Maya Hill

I t's Friday night and you and your friends decide to go to a party that's catered by Captain Morgan and Jack Daniels. Slow down and learn some responsible drinking tips before you turn your fun-filled night into a night full of disaster.

“Did I Take Any Medication?”

This is a very important question to ask yourself before taking that first shot. Taking any type of medication (over the counter and prescription) and combining it with alcohol is dangerous. Alcohol can intensify the side effects of any medication (i.e., drowsiness). If you take medicine shortly after drinking even a small amount of alcohol, the result may be getting a very high dose rather than the dose intended to be slowly released in 8 to 12 hours. Most medical bottle labels advise against the consumption of alcohol while taking medication. So if you’re feeling under the weather stay in and save the fun of having a hangover for another Saturday morning.

“Let’s just leave our drinks here while we go to the bathroom.”

You and your friends finally made it to the party and are having a good time, but it’s time to take a bathroom break and you all decide to leave your drinks unattended.

Is that all right? No. Unattended drinks give someone the prime opportunity to slip a drug into your cup. Anyone could easily become a victim of a date-rape drug. GHB (gamma-hydroxy butyrate), Roophies (Rohypnol) and Special K (Ketamine) are the most popular date-rape drugs. After the victim consumes a contaminated drink it could take as little as 20 to 30 minutes for the drug to take effect. Soon the drug will cause the victim to become relaxed and sleepy usually leading to heavy sedation for

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Take No Chances, Educate Yourself

Dannie Allen

P rotecting your sexual health and becoming educated about sexual health risk factors are probably two of the smartest decisions you will ever make. Existing risks for contracting the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) make it very important to habitually engage yourself in preventive actions that make sex for you and your partner safer. You should educate yourself on the harmful things that can affect your health, and then take the necessary steps toward prevention. After all, it is much easier to use a condom, rather than go through the pain of being infected with HIV or a STD and trying to be cured.

Probably the most well-know sexually transmitted disease is HIV. However, what people may not be aware of are the four different ways that you can put yourself at risk for contracting HIV.

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3 to 6 hours. During the victim’s ‘deep sleep’ they are sexually abused. Often victims wake up without remembering anything.

Fortunately, there are two new products on the market that can test drinks to see if any contamination has occurred. The new date-rape drug prevention kit is about the size of a credit card and contains two tests that are incorporated with chemical test areas. The test areas react by visibly changing colors when they come into contact with a drink that has been spiked with one of the major date-rape drugs. The only problem with this product is that the chemical areas will not react with any beverage containing milk or crème products, such as a White Russian or a Mudslide.

The Coaster is another new product that can be used discreetly by placing a drop of liquid on the coaster. If the cardboard changes color, this signifies that the drink is tainted. These products can be purchased via the internet at www.drinksafetech.com.

Before you go out, make sure you remember these tips in order to have a safe and responsible evening of fun:

• Consider your limit before you begin to drink.
• Eat a full meal before drinking.
• Avoid spiked drinks.
• Abstain from drinking when taking medication.
• Keep your drink in full sight throughout the night and always be aware of what you’re drinking.
• Have a plan for getting home safely before you become intoxicated.

References:
1. www.um.edu
2. www.drinksafetech.com
3. www.bsu.edu

Club Drugs: What You Don’t Know May Hurt You

Michelle Biba

Whether you are out clubbing or at a rave, you might find yourself being offered Ecstasy or Ketamine or even the possibility of being drugged without your knowledge. Date-rape drugs are becoming prevalent among predators trying to sedate their prey with gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) or Rohypnol. Be safe and educate yourself about drugs and their effects.

According to a 2001 article from the Canadian Medical Association Journal, 25% of the 1400 women who contact the Canadian Sexual Assault Centre each year report that drugs were a factor in their rape. The most common drugs that are used in date rape are alcohol, marijuana, benzodiazepines, cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines.

Currently, the most popular drugs found in dance clubs, bars, raves, and trance scenes are MDMA, Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine. MDMA or Ecstasy may cause cognitive deficits, or the degeneration of mental processes, if used on a continuous basis. MDMA most frequently comes in tablet form, although it is occasionally sold in capsules or as powder. It is usually swallowed and rarely snorted.

Ecstasy can be extremely dangerous due to the side effects and also due to the pills not actually being MDMA, but having other dangerous chemicals in them. These other chemicals, such as PMA, have been known to cause the body to drastically increase its temperature and death may follow. Testing the Ecstasy tablets is possible at some raves by sponsors promoting safe drug use or buying your own kit that is easily used in a situation like a club, etc. The most important thing to remember, if you choose to use Ecstasy, is to be hydrated, especially if you are dancing. Drink at least 2 to 4 glasses of water every hour or a sports drink.

“Roofies,” the street name for Rohypnol, is slipped into drinks, mainly alcoholic drinks, and is commonly found in clubs. This drug is currently illegal in the United States and Canada but is legally used for general anesthesia in 62 countries. The drug is sold in clear blister packs and sold for about $2 for a 1 to 2 milligram (mg) tablet. Another drug to look out for is GHB or “liquid ecstasy.” GHB is colorless and odorless, but may have a distinctively salty taste. Ketamine is usually a white powder that can be snorted and causes dream-like states and hallucinations. When used in larger amounts, Ketamine can cause delirium, amnesia, impaired motor function, high blood pressure, depression, and potentially fatal respiratory problems.

When out at clubs, do not leave your drinks unattended, do not accept drinks from anyone except the bartender.

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The first way that a person can become infected with HIV is through the exchange of bodily fluids during sexual intercourse with an infected person. A person could also acquire the disease through using a drug needle or any sharp object that penetrates the skin that has been contaminated by an infected person. The third way a person could be exposed to HIV is when an unborn child’s mother is infected with the disease. Lastly, is the risk factor associated with blood transfusions. Blood transfusions are more of a rarity these days, because of lengthy screening and preventive measures being taken to ensure only healthy blood donors; however, a small risk still exists.

There are ways in which you can protect yourself against HIV. Abstinence will rule out the risk of acquiring HIV via sexual transmission. However, if you choose to be sexually active, you should have your partner and yourself tested before becoming intimate with each other. It is important to know that many forms of birth control do not protect against HIV and STDs. Abstinence and the male and female condoms are the only birth control methods that not only help to prevent pregnancy, but also HIV and STD’s.

In regards to the prevention of HIV, a health article published in 1999 said, “Most women in the United States with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) become infected through sexual transmission, and a woman’s choice of contraception can affect her risk for HIV transmission during sexual contact with an infected partner.”

STDs such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and pubic lice can all be spread through vaginal, anal, and oral sex with someone who is infected. Syphilis is also transmitted by kissing or touching the infected area, and pubic lice and scabies can be transmitted through contact with infected bedding, clothing, upholstered furniture, and toilet seats. The fact that each of these STDs can be spread through sexual intercourse implies that protection, such as male and female condoms, is a must. But other measures can be taken as well with syphilis and pubic lice. For oral sex, a barrier between the infected area and the uninfected person is necessary. The use of Dental dams, Glyde dams, and such home devices as Reynolds Wrap (non-microwavable) function as a protective barrier, and make it possible for you to still engage in oral sex.

As mentioned before, the only birth control methods that double as a pregnancy preventer as well as protection for STDs, are abstinence and the male and female condom. It is important to educate yourself on the risk factors and harms that can jeopardize your sexual health. So remember, if you choose to be sexually active, get tested regularly and use protection!

References:


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Piercings and Tattoos 101

Getting a body piercing or tattoo can be a positive experience if a few precautions are taken in advance. To protect your health and leave with a finished product you will be happy living with, be sure to do some research in advance and have questions prepared for the technician or artist.

1. **Talk to friends** – Ask others who have gotten piercings or tattoos what their experience was like. Find out the cost, the pain involved, and the healing time required. Ask them what they would do differently if they had the chance to do it again.

2. **Decide with a clear head** – Do not get a piercing or tattoo while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Your body can act physiologically different under the influence and lead to a negative reaction.

3. **Take care of affected area** – Healing times can vary depending on size and location. Be sure to take proper care of the skin to prevent irritation or infection. Consult a physician if a pierced or tattooed area hurts or swells for an extended time period.\(^1\)

When deciding whom to choose to be your tattoo artist, meet with him or her in advance to discuss the procedure, how sterility is achieved and what his or her qualifications are. Ask to see samples of his or her work to be sure that you like the style and technique.

Tattoo and body piercing technicians should:
- Thoroughly wash hands before and after the procedure
- Wear latex gloves the entire time they are working\(^2\)
- Use single-service materials, such as needles and tube sets that are individually packaged\(^3\)
- Set up and open all supplies in front of the client
- Have an FDA-regulated autoclave on site and properly dispose of used materials\(^3\)
- Be willing to answer any questions

Unsanitized, dirty tools can lead to blood-borne diseases such as Hepatitis B, C and HIV. Hepatitis C and HIV are incurable viruses that currently have no available vaccines.\(^2\) Hepatitis C can lead to chronic liver disease or liver cancer and HIV is the precursor to AIDS.

References:
1. www.hdlp.hr.state.org
2. www.faqs.org/faqs/bodyart/piercing
3. www.tattoo.about.com

Preventing Cancer

As cancer becomes a more familiar term in our society, cancer prevention research indicates that that people can have control in preventing certain types of cancers. Just a few changes in daily lifestyle can help reduce the risks of cancer.

**Diet**

In a report by the American Institute for Cancer Research, scientists estimated that 30 to 40% of cancers are linked to diet.\(^1\) It has been found that high amounts of fat intake have been linked to cancers of the breast, colon, prostate, and possibly the pancreas, ovary, and endometrium.\(^2\)

The National Cancer Institute reported that, “Fat consumption in the United States is much higher than that needed to meet the physiological needs for energy and essential fatty acids.” Total fat intake should only be 30% of the daily calories. The National Cancer Institute also suggests eating a diet high in fiber, fruits, and vegetables.

Studies have shown that nutrition is linked to the risk of developing cancer. The American Institute for Cancer Research has developed diet and health guidelines for cancer prevention.
1. Choose a diet rich in a variety of plant-based foods.
2. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit.
3. Maintain a healthy weight and be physically active.

4. Drink alcohol only in moderation, if at all.
5. Select foods low in fat and salt.
6. Prepare and store foods safely.
7. Do not use tobacco in any form.\(^1\)

**Cigarette Smoking**

Cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. It is also the leading cause of lung cancer deaths in both men and women.\(^3\) Smoking is also responsible for most cancers of the larynx, oral cavity, and esophagus. The American Institute for Cancer Research has reported that 30% of cancers could be prevented by not smoking. The best way to quit smoking

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for most people is a combination of medicine, a method to change personal habits, and emotional support. The most popular medicines are nicotine substitutes such as the patch, nasal spray, gum, lozenges, and inhalers, also known as nicotine replacement therapy.

Alcohol

Alcohol consumption has also been linked to cancer. The National Cancer Institute reports that “Risks of all cancers combined rise as the level of intake increases; the largest study shows a detectable increase in risk following consumption of three alcoholic drinks per day which rises to a 60% excess with six or more drinks per day.”

Sun Exposure

The perfect tan is popular, especially among Southern Californians, but too much sun can be harmful to one’s health. According to the Health Unit Organization, a child born today has a 2 in 7 chance of developing skin cancer in his or her lifetime.

However, there are many things you can do to prevent cancer. The American Cancer Society has developed guidelines for the protection from ultraviolet light (UV), which include wearing a hat, using sunscreen, covering up, wearing sunglasses, and limiting sun exposure.

References:
1. www.aicr.org (American Institute for Cancer Research)
3. www.skincancer.org/prevention (The Skin Cancer Foundation)
4. www.cancer.org (American Cancer Society)

Schedule of Preventive Checkups and Screenings for Men and Women

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Men</strong></th>
<th><strong>Women</strong></th>
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<td><strong>How often?</strong></td>
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<td>Physical Exam/Pap Smear/Breast Exam</td>
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<td>Testicular Self-Exam</td>
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<td>Breast Self-Exam</td>
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<td>Rectal Exam</td>
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<td>Chest X-ray</td>
<td>Every year (if smoker) after age 40</td>
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and always be aware of your surroundings. If you think you have been drugged, have a trusted friend get you to a safe place, home or hospital, immediately.

Always be careful when purchasing drugs from others or when you are drinking alcohol in a club, and be educated about what effects a drug has on the body and mind before you try it. Educate yourself before you try anything and don’t listen to your friends’ possibly incorrect information. They could be wrong and it could be a fatal mistake. Find out the information for yourself and make your choices wisely. There are a variety of places to get accurate information on drugs and their effects. Arm yourself with knowledge before you jump into something that might have irreversible consequences.

References:
4. www.dancesafe.org
Health Resource Center Programs

SHAW (Sexual Health Awareness Workshop)
HIV/STD Testing and Counseling
Nutrition Counseling
Men’s Health Clinic
Outreach Presentations

Please call to make an appointment!!!
(562) 985-4609