



# Rohypnol, GHB and Other ‘Date Rape’ Drugs

Although not a new phenomenon, concern over substance-related rape is rapidly increasing as perpetrators find more severe and dangerous means to sedate victims. The common use of alcohol as a sedative is being combined with and even replaced by illicit use of Rohypnol (ro-hip-nol), GHB, and other similar drugs. Though Rohypnol is illegal in the U.S., and GHB is FDA-approved only for physician supervised protocols, they are both manufactured and sold legally in other countries. Rohypnol is intended to curb severe sleep disorders, and GHB to be used as an adjunct to anesthesia. However, more and more frequently these drugs are being used to sedate potential sexual assault victims. Among reported cases in which drugs are used to facilitate rape, the perpetrator most commonly laces a victim’s drink with the drug. Since Rohypnol and GHB (as well as most other drugs used to facilitate date rape) can be produced in forms that lack color, odor, taste, and dissolve quickly—a victim can ingest it unknowingly.

## Facts about Rohypnol:

### What is it? Is it illegal?

- “Rohypnol” is the brand name for the drug flunitrazepam, a central nervous system depressant, belonging to a class of drugs known as benzodiazepines, which include widely used medications such as Valium, Librium, and Xanax.
- Rohypnol is currently a Schedule IV drug under the Federal Controlled Substance Act of 1970 with Schedule I penalties for illegal possession, importation, or distribution in the United States.

### Where is Rohypnol most commonly used? What are its effects?

- In the U.S. Rohypnol is most commonly used in Florida, Texas, and other southern states; places where the drug can be brought over the border easily and smuggled to consumers through postal and delivery services, or by individuals. However, Rohypnol’s use is not limited to the South. In fact, WCASA has received reports from students in Wisconsin who state that Rohypnol is available on their campuses. The recipe for Rohypnol has also recently been made available on the Internet, a fact that greatly contributes to the wide spread availability of the drug.
- Rohypnol is ingested orally, frequently in conjunction with alcohol or other drugs. The effects, which begin within 30 minutes, include sedation, dizziness, memory impairment, motor in-coordination, muscle relaxation, slurred speech, impaired judgement, amnesia, loss of inhibitions, loss of consciousness, visual disturbances, nausea, and excitability and/or aggressive behavior in some users.
- Effects of Rohypnol reach their peak within 1-2 hours after intake and continue for an average of 8-10 hours. At higher doses and when combined with other drugs the effects may persist for 24 hours. The effects of Rohypnol are approximately 10 times greater than the effects of Valium.

### How do I identify Rohypnol?

- Manufactured by a large Pharmaceutical company (Hoffmann-La Roche), Rohypnol is available in round white tablets, slightly smaller than aspirin. One side of the tablet contains the name “Roche” and an encircled “1” or “2” while the reverse side is marked with either a cross or single horizontal groove.
- Rohypnol commonly sells for approximately \$5 per tablet, and is often delivered in bubble packaging.

*(American Prosecutors Research Institute Violence Against Women Program. (1999). The Prosecution of Rohypnol and GHB Related Sexual Assaults.)*

Common street names for Rohypnol include: Ruffies, Roche (pronounced “row-shay”), Rochies, The Forget Pill, La Roche, Rib, Mexican Valium, R-2, Rope, Ropies, Roopies, Roach-2.

*This information sheet was compiled in 2000 by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA). WCASA is a membership organization of sexual assault centers, other organizations, and individuals throughout Wisconsin working to end sexual violence. For information sheets on other topics or to become a member contact WCASA, 600 Williamson St., Suite N-2, Madison, WI 53703, (608)257-1516, www.wcasa.org. For more information about sexual assault or to receive support with a sexual assault experience, contact your local sexual assault program. This sheet may be reproduced in its original format only.*

## Facts about GHB:

### What is GHB? Is it illegal?

- Gamma hydroxy butyrate (“GHB”) is a central nervous system depressant that can relax, or at higher doses, sedate the body while slowing breathing and heart rate to dangerous levels.
- GHB is usually a street manufactured drug, commonly found at nightclubs, underground RAVE parties, and used by body builders for its purported anabolic effects.
- GHB, while not a controlled substance, is not approved for medical use in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued advisories in 1990 and 1997 declaring GHB unsafe and illicit, except for use under FDA-approved physician supervised protocols.

### How Do I Identify GHB?

- GHB can be produced in clear liquid, white powder, tablet, and capsule forms, and it is often used in combination with alcohol, making it even more dangerous. GHB is most commonly found in liquid form in small bottles or vials. Plastic sports bottles or “spring water” bottles and small “Visine” eye-drop containers are most often associated with its use. In liquid form, GHB can sometimes take on a slightly salty flavor.
- GHB is used predominantly by adolescents and young adults, often when they attend nightclubs and raves. GHB is commonly sold for about \$10.00 per capful or “swig”.
- Street names for GHB include: Gamma-OH, Grievous Bodily Harm, Georgia Home Boy, Goop, Liquid Ecstasy, and Liquid X.

*(American Prosecutors Research Institute Violence Against Women Program. (1999). The Prosecution of Rohypnol and GHB Related Sexual Assaults.)*

### What are the effects of GHB?

- GHB is often used “recreationally” for its ability to produce intoxicating and euphoric effects.
- Other effects include: loss of consciousness, memory impairment, confusion, loss of inhibition, seizures, dizziness, extreme drowsiness, stupor, agitation, nausea, visual disturbances, severe respiratory depression, reduced heart rate and blood pressure, coma, and death.
- The effects of GHB occur within 10-30 minutes of ingestion and last 3-6 hours, depending on the dosage.

### If you suspect you have been drugged and/or sexually assaulted:

Individuals who suspect they have been assaulted and/or drugged with Rohypnol, GHB, or any other substance, may choose to contact their local rape crisis center or law enforcement agency for drug testing and information on available resources. Most substances can be detected through appropriate drug testing. The findings of such tests can provide valuable evidence in a court of law if the victim/survivor chooses to prosecute the case.

Rohypnol can be found in urine for up to 72 hours after ingestion. The urine test for Rohypnol will also test for the presence of other benzodiazepines, as well as for marijuana, cocaine and some opiates and barbiturates. GHB, on the other hand, is cleared from the body relatively quickly, so it is sometimes more difficult to detect through drug testing. Samples taken closer to the time of ingestion increase the likelihood of detecting the drug. Individuals who suspect they have been drugged and/or assaulted should also try to save the glass/beverage in which the drug was dissolved for testing.

### Other drugs associated with date rape:

Gamma Aminobutyric (GABA)  
1,4 Butanediol  
Diazepam (Valium)  
Clonazepam (Klonopin, Rivotnil)  
Temazepam (Restoril)  
Bromazepam (Lexotan)  
Chloral Hydrate  
Sleeping Aids  
Animal Tranquilizers  
Ketamine Hydrochloride (Ketamine, Special K)  
Gamma Butyrolactone (GBL, Renewtrient, Revivarant G, Blue Nitro Vitality, GH Revilizer, Gamma G, Remforce)  
Lorazepam (Ativan)  
Alprazolam (Xanax)  
Oxazepam (Serax)  
Nitrazepam (Mogadon)  
Chlordiazpoxide (Librium)  
Marijuana  
Ethchlorvynol  
Muscle Relaxants  
Flurazepam (Dalmane)  
Triazolam (Halcion)  
Scopolamine (Burundanga)  
Cocaine  
Barbiturates  
Opiates  
Amphetamines  
Antihistamines

### For more information about date rape drugs:

Contact your local rape crisis center, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), or your local law enforcement agency. Hoffman-La Roche also has a toll free information hotline (1-800-720-1076) that provides general information on Rohypnol.