

# the RED CUP

Q&A



separating alcohol fact from fiction  
EVERY TUESDAY IN THE DAILY WILDCAT

## Q How often are students “roofied” through alcoholic beverages?

**A.** Not very often. Flunitrazepam, a powerful sedative that is sold under the trade name Rohypnol® but more commonly referred to as a “roofie,” gets its reputation as “the date rape drug” due to its sleep-inducing, amnesia-like effects. The idea that sexual assault commonly follows a spiked or “roofied” drink is largely unfounded, however.

According to one study, only 0.33% - 1% of reported sexual assaults had evidence of flunitrazepam.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, research from Sweden that looked at the role of benzodiazepines in general (the class of drugs “roofies” belong to) following a reported sexual assault also found they were relatively uncommon.<sup>2</sup>

In reality, the most common date rape drug is alcohol, which is legal, accessible and, more often than not, consumed willingly. So why is the “roofie” myth so persistent? For many of us, thinking of alcohol in these terms – when it is often associated with friends and good times – is perhaps hard to reconcile, so we tend to ascribe the date rape label to “roofies” instead.

Sex when drugs or alcohol are present can be risky. Remember that if a person cannot consent to sex due to impairment by drugs or alcohol, under Arizona law, sex with that person is considered sexual assault. And while both alcohol and other drugs can make it easier to ignore sexual boundaries or more difficult to avert a potential assault, it's important to keep in mind that they do not *cause* rape by themselves.

The Oasis Program Against Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence offers a range of services to UA students, staff and faculty. For more info, go to [health.arizona.edu](http://health.arizona.edu) or call 626-2051. Want a free “Consent Is Sexy” zipper-pull to show your support? Stop by the Oasis Program office on the 3rd floor of Campus Health.

References: <sup>1</sup>EiSohly, Mahmoud A.; Lee, Luen F.; Holzhauer, Lynn B.; Salamone, Salvatore J. (2001). *Benzodiazepines and GHB*: 127–144. <sup>2</sup>Jones, A.W.; Kugelberg, F.C.; Holmgren, A.; Ahlner, J. Occurrence of ethanol and other drugs in blood and urine specimens from female victims of alleged sexual assault *Forensic Science International, Volume 181, Issue 1-3, Pages 40-46*



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Got a question about alcohol?

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