

## What is spiking?

**Spiking can happen to anyone**  
**Spiking has long-lasting effects**  
**Spiking is a removal of consent**  
**Spiking is illegal**

Spiking is when someone puts alcohol or drugs into another person's drink or their body without their knowledge and/or consent. The drugs used could be illegal or prescription drugs.

Most commonly, it is a person's drink that is spiked but food or/and cigarettes could also be spiked. And, unfortunately, there has been a recent increase in the number of incidents of spiking with the use of a needle.

Whilst intentions may vary, typically the motive behind spiking is to make somebody more vulnerable possibly to facilitate the act of theft, sexual assault or any other form of abuse.

Spiking is illegal and carries a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. This is irrespective of whether, for example, a drink is consumed, a person is harmed, or there is intent to commit a further act. If other criminal acts take place then the maximum sentence will be longer. A criminal offence will have life-long implications, for example, impacting on one's ability to apply for jobs, obtain a visa or travel abroad.

## What is the University doing to keep you safe?

Spiking is very much in the public consciousness, with victims speaking out about their experiences and campaigners lobbying for spiking to be a named criminal offence.

The Home Affairs Committee has called on the Government to work with local authorities to develop an anti-spiking strategy. Healthcare providers are developing and sharing best practice. A lot of work is now being done nationally to train the night-time industries and security providers to identify and act appropriately with victims of spiking. As a University, we know we have an important role to play in helping keep all our students safe, better understanding the problem of spiking and encouraging reporting to prevent incidents from occurring. For that, Middlesex University is leading a community of practice across the sector to deliver guidance to support the higher education sector in combatting spiking.

Spiking will not be tolerated and the University will respond to any incident through the University's Student Conduct and Discipline procedure. We will continue to communicate via various channels that the University has zero tolerance for spiking, and that any student found culpable of such behaviour will be dealt with accordingly where the student could face permanent exclusion from the University.

Middlesex University security staff are vigilant to spiking behaviours. Drinks covers, which can help reduce the risk of a drink being spiked, are handed out at various university events, such as the Healthy Campus Awareness Week, and security staff are available to speak with students about any concerns or worries they may have.

Middlesex University is committed to creating safe spaces for all. As part of that ongoing commitment, the university's Changing the Culture Initiative (CCI) delivers a range of projects which address various forms of abuse, including spiking, through collaboration between students, staff and community groups.

## **What are the signs that somebody has been spiked?**

It can be hard for someone to tell if their drink has been spiked as the drugs are usually tasteless and have no smell or colour. And, with respect to needles, often a victim does not notice or recognise when they have been injected.

But there are signs which, as a friend, you can look out for:

Symptoms of spiking can develop within 5 minutes and can last for up to 12 hours. They include:

- Dizziness
- Difficulty walking
- Confusion (especially the next day or after waking up)
- Nausea
- Hallucinations
- Tiredness
- Blurred vision
- Paranoia
- Loss of memory

## **How can you and your friends keep safe?**

Whilst there is no question that responsibility lies solely with the perpetrator, we feel it's important to share some general advice which might help our students and their friends stay safe.

*Keep sight of your drink at all times.*

*If you need to leave your drink, for example to go to the bathroom, leave it with a trusted friend. If you can't do that, it's best to get a new one.*

*If you haven't seen the drink being prepared, it's best not to drink it.*

*If someone offers you a drink, it's best to go with them to the bar to see it being prepared.*

*If you feel comfortable doing so, anti-spiking devices and testing kits are available.*

*Drinking in bottles might mitigate some risk of drinking in open top drinks but if you notice that the cap of your bottled drink has already been opened/tempered with, it's best to ask for a new one.*

*Keep an eye on your friends – keep track of where everyone is and look after each other.*

## **What should you do if you're feeling unsafe or/and if somebody is acting suspiciously?**

Tell staff or security at the bar, club or venue immediately. MDX House, and many other locations, operate the '[Ask for Angela](#)' scheme which allows you to raise issues of safety discreetly.

## **What should you do if you or your friend has been spiked?**

*Tell staff or security at the bar, club or venue immediately.*

*Tell a friend and tell them to stay with you.*

*Move to a safe space and stay there with a friend until a trained professional can advise on next steps.*

*Drink water and don't drink any further alcohol as this can worsen the effects.*

*If you're on campus, contact Security on **0208 411 6200** who will arrange for medical help if you're feeling unwell, including calling an ambulance.*

*If you're off campus, call emergency services on **999**.*

## **How can you report spiking?**

### **To the police.**

Report to the police by calling 999 in an emergency or 101 in a non-emergency. You can also report anonymously via [Crimestoppers](#).

With your consent, the University will report the alleged perpetrator to the police.

### **To the University.**

Where a student is accused of spiking, the University will investigate any allegation under the Student Conduct and Discipline rules where permanent exclusion would be the likely outcome if a student is found to have spiked, or intended to spike.

To find out how to report to the University, including anonymously, see [Report.It.To.Stop.It](#).

If you would like support to report an incident to the University or to the police, contact Care and Concern either online (by completing the Report.It.To.Stop.It reporting form) or by calling 0208 411 6200 and asking to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

## **Where can you get help and support?**

For further information about accessing support, please [view the Report.It.To.Stop.It page on UniHub](#) or phone [Care and Concern](#) on 0208 411 6200 to speak directly with a Designated Safeguarding Officer (available Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Support is also available from external services such as [Victim Support](#).

If you need emotional support, access [Counselling and Mental Health support](#) services at the University.