

Spiking and Risk Taking

By Yvette McDonnell

Now more than ever it is highly important for the young people of Ireland to be told of the dangers of alcohol, drugs, and other substances. I am sure that we are all aware of these and have seen the effects or experienced them in one form or another. However, a lot of the time a person has no control over this happening to them. One form of this is spiking.

Spiking is to give a person an illegal drug without them knowing. This can happen by putting a pill in their drink or food, or now a more popular way is by injection. This week Ms. McNamara delivered a talk to all TY students about risk taking and spiking.

The talk started out by getting students to assess what a risk means to them and identify how likely they are to take risks. It was an open discussion about how risks can be both good and bad. A person who is less inclined to take risks is more likely to think about the potential consequences and outcomes. Whereas a person who takes more risks likes to chase the adrenaline of the unknown endings to their actions. However, it is healthy for most people to have a balance of taking risks and not. With all this being said, it is important to know that the risks a person takes or does not take will not define them as a person. The pros and cons to addictive substances were discussed also. These were: caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol. This fits in with the risk-taking aspect of the talk as examples of risks both good and bad in normal everyday society.

Then the conversation turned to spiking. Most girls already knew what spiking was and how horrifically it can affect a person both mentally and physically. Ms. McNamara then told her own story of how a normal night out changed into a horrible case of spiking. For me this brought to life how real this issue is. Spiking can happen to anyone. Either carried out by a complete stranger or maybe even a close friend. There is no certainty to how a drug may affect someone's body. This could lead to severe allergic reactions or in more serious cases death. The main reason to spiking is to see how a person will react to the drug given. However, the person's intentions could be far more sinister than that.

The most common places for spiking to occur are at house parties or night clubs. If you think that you have been spiked on a night out, you must go to the GP or a hospital to get treatment as soon as possible. Then the incident must be reported to the Gardaí. If you believe one of your friends or someone near you has been spiked, the best thing that you can do is to stay with them. You must not leave them alone. Then you should phone someone you trust to bring them home or to the hospital.

This year alone the rates of spiking have skyrocketed. The only way of preventing it could be to never leave your drink unattended, to get a cover to put over your drink, and when you are moving keep your hand over your drink. Spiking could happen to anyone and is never the victim's fault. Remember to not only look out for yourself but also those around you. You would appreciate it if someone did it for you.