Sheriff

Hobart Lewis
Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Sexual Assault Prevention Tips:

At Home:

1. Keep entrances well lit. If normal lighting is not functioning in an entryway, approach with extreme caution. It is not uncommon for a criminal to remove, unscrew, or break bulbs in entryways.
2. Check the identification of any sales or service persons before letting them in. Ask for a photo ID. If you have any doubts phone the company for verification.
3. Equip your home with peepholes, dead bolts, and chain locks. If you have a child, add a second peephole at their eye level.
4. Never give the impression that you are at home alone if strangers telephone or come to your door. Advise your children to do the same.
5. Beware of potential hiding places and avoid them.
6. Keep outside bushes and shrubbery trimmed. Overgrown bushes and trees often provide excellent hiding places for criminals.
7. Plant defensive shrubbery around your home, especially beneath windows. Bushes that feature thorns, such as bougainvillea, or stiff, spiky leaves are not good hiding places for criminals.
8. If you come home and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, do not go in. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

In the Car:

1. Keep your car in good working order and gas tank at least half full. Make a practice of filling up your vehicle during the daylight hours. Never let it get so low that you are forced to stop for fuel, particularly at night in an area with which you are unfamiliar.
2. Always have your keys out and ready before leaving a building to approach your car. If you are looking through your purse for keys, you are giving an attacker prime opportunity to sneak up on you.
3. Look around and in your car before entering. If you are concerned for any reason, simply walk past your car instead of getting into it.
4. Lock your car door immediately after entering the vehicle. Make this your first action - even before putting the key into the ignition.
5. When stopped in traffic keeps doors locked as usual and leave yourself enough distance from the vehicle in front of you should a criminal attempt to walk alongside your vehicle and gain entry or attack you.
6. Park in well lighted areas and lock the doors, even if you'll be gone a short time. Check your surroundings before getting out of your car. If something or someone strikes you as out of place or threatening, drive away.

7. When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floors before getting in.
8. If you are accosted in a parking lot, away from your own vehicle, consider rolling underneath a nearby auto. It is difficult to force anyone out from under a car.
9. If an attacker does manage to get into your car while you are in it, do everything in your power to exit the automobile. If you are still behind the wheel, steer your vehicle into a barricade, a pole, a wall -- any object that will create a minor accident. Take advantage while your attacker's attention has been diverted and exit the automobile. Run, yell, and scream. Attract attention.
10. Don't stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. Instead, help by driving to the nearest phone and calling police to help.
11. If you get a flat tire, drive carefully on it until you reach a safe, well lighted and well traveled area. If necessary, better to ruin a tire than gamble with your safety.
12. If you are involved in an accident, stay in your car until police arrive. In minor accidents where the other driver suggests you exchange insurance information, simply hold up your driver license and insurance card against the window.
13. If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn. If that is not possible, drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police. DO NOT leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.
14. If possible, have a cellular phone in your car for use in emergencies.

While walking or jogging:

1. When on the street, walk facing oncoming traffic. A person walking with traffic can be followed, forced into a car, and abducted more easily than a person walking against traffic.
2. Walk with confidence, head held high and be aware of your surroundings
3. Walk close to the curb or on the sidewalk. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
4. Don't walk alone at night and always avoid areas where there are few people.
5. Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never go too close to the car. Stay far enough away from the car that you can turn and run easily. An alternative is to simply state, "I don't know" and keep walking.
6. If you feel you are being followed, walk to a well populated area.
7. If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream, blow a whistle or yell for help.
8. Trust your instincts. If a particular place, person, or group of persons make you feel uneasy, go a different direction, do not approach.

At a party or a bar-Date Rape Drugs-

1. Never leave a drink unattended. **NEVER.**
2. Do not accept a drink from anyone you would not "put your life into their hands." Remember, any stranger or casual acquaintance could be suspect. Even those people who are mixing or pouring drinks.)

3. If you are feeling sick or dizzy while out socially, go to someone you KNOW and TRUST. If there is no person you can talk to about your condition, call someone on the phone. Never leave alone. NEVER. (The intent of date rape drugs is to get you isolated and then to assault you.)
4. If you think you have been drugged and cannot tell or call someone, call 911. A blood sample can be collected and appropriate tests run.
5. Remember, alcohol greatly increases the effects of these drugs. The mixture could be lethal.

Date Rapes Drugs-GHB, Rohypnol, Ketamine-why are these "date rape drugs?"

1. They are easy to administer. (Stir and dissolve)
2. When victims feel the effects, they often leave and are caught alone and vulnerable.
3. If victims 'come to' during an assault, the drugs render them totally helpless and unable to do anything.
4. When victims are raped, they doubt their experience because of the impaired memory these drugs cause.

Basic Safety Tips:

Always let someone know where you are and where you may be going. You should report all unusual stalking or following of you by any suspicious persons.

1. Maintain your personal space. Stay alert! If a person moves inside your comfort zone, move away. If that person persists, run.
2. Be alert when leaving stores or shopping malls. This is a time when criminals know you are carrying cash, checkbooks, credit cards, or valuable merchandise.
3. Don't use outside ATMs at night, or in unfamiliar or unsafe surroundings. This is another time when criminals know you are carrying cash.
4. Avoid filling your arms with packages. You might have to make more trips, but keep one arm and hand free whenever possible.
5. When friends drop you off at home or work, ask them to wait until you are safely inside before leaving. Extend this courtesy to your own friends when driving them to a destination.
6. When you or a friend leave a place to go home, agree to call each other once you are safely inside your home.

If you are attacked:

There is no single strategy that always works, so remember these tips:

1. Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.
2. It may be more advisable to submit than to resist. **You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances**. Be especially careful if the attacker has a weapon.
3. Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy does not work, try another. Possible options, in addition to non-resistance, are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention and physical resistance. Defecating, vomiting or urinating on your attacker are other possible deterrents.
4. Try your best to stay alert and observant so that you can better describe the attacker and the assault to the police.
5. If forced to get into a vehicle, your life is in danger, so resist at all cost. Attract attention, crate a HUGE disturbance or try to disable your suspect, but DO NOT get into the vehicle. Scream, gouge at his eyes, kick or knee him in the groin, stomp on his feet, use your elbows, scratch him with your fingernails. Fight like you never have before. This is the fight for YOUR life and it could become your last one.

If you are attacked, once the attacker is gone and you can safely get help, do so immediately. Call 911, and as badly as you will want to…DO NOT SHOWER, BRUSH YOUR TEETH OR CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES, this can destroy valuable evidence that can help apprehend and convict your attacker.

There are many support services available for victims of sexual assault. Your local law enforcement victim advocate will guide you to those providers.