

Domestic Violence

Definition

- Domestic violence is when someone hurts their intimate partner.
- This can be physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual abuse.
- Other terms are intimate partner violence, partner abuse, or spousal abuse.

Health Information

Symptoms

- **Physical injury.** Physical abuse can cause bruises, cuts, burns, broken bones, or head injuries.
- **Sexual abuse.** Sexual abuse can cause cuts or bruises, emotional distress, pregnancy, or infection.
- **Mental health issues.** Victims of domestic violence can develop anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Children who witness domestic violence can also develop these issues.

Types

- Most often, domestic violence happens between a female victim and a male abuser. However, anyone can be a victim of domestic violence.
- **Physical abuse.** This includes hitting, burning, strangling, or throwing objects at someone.
- **Verbal abuse.** This is using violent or intimidating language toward someone. This includes cursing, yelling or threatening.
- **Emotional abuse.** This is demeaning, ridiculing, manipulating, or controlling behavior.
- **Sexual abuse.** This is forced sex, sexual harassment, or unwanted touching of any kind.

Care Advice

1. Key Points

- No one has the right to hurt you. You have the right to be protected and safe.
- Being a victim of domestic violence is not your fault.
- There are resources, places, and people to help you find safety.
- Here is some information that should help.

2. Develop An Emergency Escape Plan

- If you are in immediate physical danger, call 911.
- **Support.** Find trusted friends or family who you can go to for help.
- **Safe place.** Think ahead about where you can go. This should be a place unknown to your abuser. Examples include with family or friends. Know the name, phone number and location of a local women's shelter. You can even go to the emergency room.
- **Emergency bag.** Pack and hide a bag with extra clothing, money, keys, and important documents.
- **Keep a record.** Keep all information about abuse. This can be police reports, a diary, or photographs of injuries. Put these in a safety deposit box. Or keep them at the home of a friend.
- **Use the police and the law.** Get a restraining order. Go to the police to help document abuse.

3. Important Documents to Keep in Your Emergency Escape Bag

- Home keys and deed
- Driver's license, car keys and deed
- Health insurance cards
- Birth certificate and social security card
- Bank account information and checkbook
- Your children's birth certificates, social security numbers and school records

4. Resources: Domestic Violence Hotlines and Websites

- When calling or looking online for help, be sure your abuser doesn't know what you're doing. Remember, others can look at the computer's history and see what websites were visited. This will help keep you safe.
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline.** 1-800-799-7233. You can also text 88788 to talk with someone. This hotline gives support and answers questions about domestic violence. It can help you prepare a safety plan. It also has listings of domestic violence shelters and programs. It can connect you with local law enforcement. You can call it anonymously. Help is available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Website: <https://www.thehotline.org/>.
- **Domestic Shelters Website.** Information about abuse, how to leave safely, and shelters in your community. <https://www.domesticshelters.org/help>.
- **Hot Peach Pages Website.** International directory of domestic violence agencies across the world. <https://www.hotpeachpages.net/>.

5. What to Expect

- Planning ahead will help you escape your abuser if you need to.
- There are people to help keep you safe.

Call Your Doctor If

- You need help leaving an abusive situation
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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