

Abuse During Pregnancy

Abuse during pregnancy is a sad reality as pregnancy is intended to be a time of great joy and anticipation. New life is growing and developing and parents are preparing for all of the changes that this new baby will bring.

For up to one in five women, however, the experience of pregnancy precipitates the life-altering experience of intimate partner abuse.

You and your baby deserve to be safe. Abuse often starts or get worse during pregnancy. There is support. You are not alone.

Are you and your baby safe?

Does your partner:

Yell at you?

Call you names?

Blame you for being pregnant?

Break your things?

Hurt or kill your pets?

Threaten to hurt you?

Always need to be in charge?

Keep you from seeing your friends or family?

Keep you from seeing your doctor or midwife?

Control what or how much you eat?

Control the money?

Threaten to take the kids away?

This is emotional abuse. It can lead to physical abuse. All kinds of abuse hurt.

Does your partner:

Hit or kick you?

Hurt you in the breasts, belly or between the legs?

Force you to have sex?

If you said yes to any of the above questions, you and your baby may be in danger.

Abuse is not legal. It's not your fault. You are not alone.

Abuse during pregnancy can cause you to:

Feel sad and alone

Feel anxious

Feel bad about yourself

Have pain and injuries

Turn to alcohol and/or drugs

Not eat or sleep well

Lose your baby

....and cause your baby to:

Be born too small

Be born too early

Be stillborn

Have injuries or infections

Have later health problems

Be abused after it is born

Abuse can also cause problems in the relationship between you and your baby.
Protect yourself.

What can you do?

Tell someone you trust what is going on

Find people to help you:

- friends and family
- your doctor or midwife
- your prenatal educator
- a public health nurse
- a counselor
- a shelter for women

If possible, have an emergency escape plan

Get help to leave the abusive relationship

Abuse usually gets worse over time. It does not stop when the baby is born.
Keeping silent keeps you alone. Talk to someone you trust.