

Prenatal Education

Key Messages for Ontario



Abuse

Key Messages

There are many forms of abuse within intimate relationships.

Abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional, financial, and/or sexual. Some examples of abuse include being:

- ▶ Hit or kicked.
- ▶ Threatened.
- ▶ Insulted or ridiculed.
- ▶ Controlled financially.
- ▶ Forced to have sex when you say no or don't want to.

In an abusive relationship, the two partners are not equal. One dominates the other. Fear and the feeling of having to be extremely cautious of one's words or actions are common. Abuse may not happen all of the time.

Abuse can be harmful to you and your baby.

All kinds of abuse can harm you and your baby. Abuse may cause your baby to be born preterm or to have low birth weight. Abuse can also affect breastfeeding and your ability to bond with your baby. Living in an environment where there is abuse places both you and your baby at increased risk of physical or psychological danger. Protect yourself and your baby. Tell someone you trust if you are being abused.

Abuse often starts or gets worse during pregnancy.

Abuse can happen to anyone. It often starts during pregnancy. Abuse usually continues after the baby is born. It tends to get worse over time. Abuse can continue after a couple has separated. Abuse anytime is wrong.

Ask for help if you are being abused.

Talk to your health care provider or someone you trust if you need help. There are services for women who are being abused. This help is confidential. These services will support you as you make decisions about your future. You may need legal help or information about how and where you can keep yourself and your baby or children safe. Your local children's aid society can help you look after the safety and well-being of your baby or children. Contact any of the following for support and information about abuse.

- ▶ Your health care provider
- ▶ Your local public health unit 1-866-532-3161
- ▶ Assaulted Women's Helpline 1-866-863-0511
- ▶ Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses
www.endvaw.ca/about-cnwth
- ▶ Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres 416-323-7327
www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca
- ▶ Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies 1-800-718-1797
www.oacas.org/childwelfare/locate.htm
- ▶ Shelter Safe
www.sheltersafe.ca
- ▶ For emergencies call 911
- ▶ oMama
www.omama.com