

## **Abuse During Pregnancy**

Abuse during pregnancy is more common than most people think. About 1 in 5 women suffer from domestic violence when they are pregnant. Even if they have never been abused before, pregnancy may be a time when abuse can start. Women who are abused during pregnancy often feel confused and even embarrassed. They ask themselves, "How can this be happening to me?" There is nothing to be embarrassed about. The abuser is to blame. Abuse is never the victim's fault.

There are many reasons why abuse may happen during pregnancy. Your partner is angry because the pregnancy is unplanned or planned and now he does not want the baby. Your partner may feel jealous about the baby. Your partner may feel angry because the baby is coming too soon after the last baby.

There are many effects the abuse can have on your pregnancy. You may be anemic because you aren't eating right or getting enough vitamins and iron or you may not gain enough weight because of the stress. If abuse is happening in the abdominal area, you may have bleeding during your first two trimesters. You may have more infections. Your baby may be too small at birth or be born early. You may feel anxious, upset and lonely which could lead to risk for things such as smoking or using drugs or alcohol during pregnancy.

Talk to your doctor, nurse, midwife or social worker about what is happening to you. They can help.

You can also call the 24 hour National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

Help is available in English and Spanish and many other languages.

All contact with the hotline is free and confidential.