

Domestic Violence and Reproductive Health

Violence against women is a serious and large problem. It harms women at any age. Women of reproductive age are especially at risk. Women from age 16 to 24 are at greatest risk. Violence can limit a woman's ability to manage her reproductive health. Being in a violent relationship may force women to make choices that are not their own through:

- rape
- being forced to do unwanted sexual activities, or
- their partners preventing them from using birth control.

This can result in unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other infections. Some women suffer miscarriages when they wanted to complete a pregnancy. Some become mothers before they are ready. Some may lose their ability to become pregnant.

It happens to many women including these:

Janey - Every time I would confront him about his lies and unfaithfulness, he would force himself on me sexually. He always refused to wear a condom. He would act offended when I suggested he use one.

Carolle- - I started dating a 32-year-old man when I was 19. I noticed that whole rows of pills would disappear. When I called him on the disappearing birth control, he responded that he "knew" I wanted to have his child.

Libby –“ What's the big deal?’ Her boyfriend once replied after raping her. ‘It's not like you couldn't get your hands on the morning after pill if you actually cared.’

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Does my partner make me have sex even when I don't want to? Does my partner mess with my birth control or refuse to use condoms? Has my partner ever tried to get me pregnant when I didn't want to be?

Talk to your health care provider. They can help you find the help you need.

If you are worried about your safety and you need to talk, call us.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.ndvh.org

National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline

1-866-331-9474

1-866-331-8453 (TTY for the Deaf)

www.loveisrespect.org

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

All contact with the hotlines is free and confidential.

You can also visit a new web site designed to help women experiencing reproductive coercion and it is a place to share your story. www.KnowMoreSayMore.org