



# BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

## Victim of Domestic Abuse?

### HOW TO TELL & WHAT TO DO

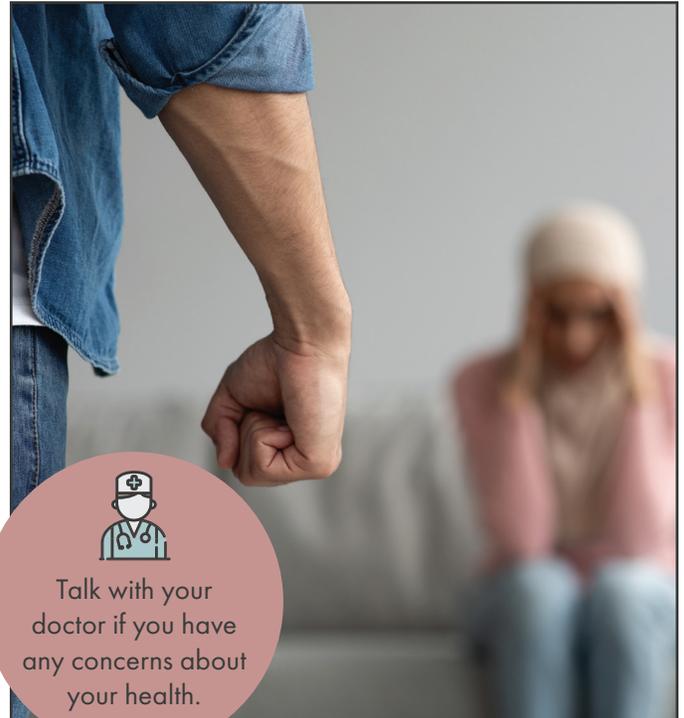
When you think of abuse you may think of someone kicking or punching another person. And that is indeed abuse. But abuse can take many other forms. Abuse can involve sexual violence. For many, it's psychological—making someone feel worthless or isolating them from friends and family. Sometimes it includes stalking. All these behaviors are forms of domestic violence. This is sometimes called intimate partner violence. According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, at least 25 percent of women and 10 percent of men are estimated to have experienced intimate partner violence.

#### SPOTTING ABUSE

You may not realize that the small comments a loved one makes to you are doing harm. You may even make excuses for them. It's important to recognize the signs of an abusive relationship so you can get help. Controlling behavior is a common sign. Your partner may monitor where you are and how much you see friends and family. They might decide what you wear or eat or how you spend your money.

Verbal threats are also common. Other warning signs include name calling, humiliating someone in front of others, or blaming someone else for their own violent outburst.

Intimate partner violence affects the whole family. Children in homes where a parent is abused may be fearful and anxious. They can be afraid of conflict.



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

They may also often be on guard, waiting for violence to break out.

Heavy drinking is one risk factor for intimate partner violence. Studies show that partner abuse is much more likely on days of heavy alcohol use. Other factors are also linked to committing partner violence. These include harmful use of drugs, having a personality disorder, and having abused a previous partner.

#### IDENTIFYING THE IMPACT

Some people experience one act of partner violence. Others suffer repeated abuse over years. The effects from either can be long-lasting. The harm from domestic violence isn't always visible. Experiencing it puts you at higher risk for a range of health conditions. These include heart disease, high blood pressure, digestive problems, and reproductive issues.

Intimate partner violence is linked to several mental health conditions like depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicide. People who experience intimate partner violence are also more likely to binge drink and misuse other drugs. Studies show that many people may suffer brain injuries as a result of physical abuse.

Domestic violence can escalate with tragic results. In the U.S., women are more likely to be killed by a current or former intimate partner than by someone else.

### GET HELP

If you're experiencing intimate partner violence, help is available.

**If there is immediate danger, call 911.**

**Get medical care.** If you have been injured or sexually assaulted, go to a local hospital emergency room or urgent care center.

**Contact a domestic violence or sexual assault program in your area.** They can provide emotional support, peer counseling, safe emergency housing, information, and other services whether you decide to stay or leave the relationship.

**Talk to someone.** Reach out to someone you trust for emotional support. Whenever possible, get involved with people and activities outside your home and encourage your children to do so.

