

**I'm in an abusive relationship...  
What should I do?**

If you recognize any of the warning signs then you may be in a dangerous situation. You can call the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre, Gold Coast on 55 329000 for free confidential support, counselling, and referrals to local resources (you don't have to give your name or any identifying information). You may also be able to talk about emergency strategies you can use if you decide to leave or if you find yourself in an emergency situation. Also let your doctor or healthcare provider know your situation so you can get all the help and support you need.

Call 000 immediately if you ever fear that your partner is about to hurt you.

**How can I approach a pregnant friend  
whom I think is in an abusive relationship?**

Share your concerns with her and ask how you can help. Encourage her to reach out for support and counselling. No one deserves to be abused. Remind your friend that the abuse is not her fault; it's her partner's problem and his alone. Encourage her to talk to a domestic violence counsellor, and to confide in her healthcare provider. Let her know that she is not alone, and try to remain non-judgmental & supportive.

You can ring the  
**Domestic Violence  
Prevention Centre**  
**5532 9000**

- To talk
- To get support
- To seek information
- To arrange to see a counselor
- To join a women's support group
- To ask about brochures / pamphlets
- To arrange speakers for groups

Open from Monday, Tuesday  
Thursday, Friday  
9am—5pm

Wednesdays 9am—1pm

Website **[www.domesticviolence.com.au](http://www.domesticviolence.com.au)**

PO Box 409 Southport QLD 4215

Facsimile: **55 711508** Admin **55914222**

**Other Useful Telephone Numbers**

D V Connect Domestic Violence Line  
**1800 811 811** 7 Days, 24hours

Women's Legal Service  
**1800 677 278**

Legal Aid  
**1300 651 188**

Police Prosecutions  
**55 71 4383**

Southport Courthouse  
**5583 5900**

Coolangatta Courthouse  
**5536 3133**

# Domestic Violence and Pregnancy



Produced By  
Domestic Violence Prevention Centre  
Gold Coast

## Understanding Domestic Violence

Women's safety is at greater risk in the home than on the street or in public. Most violence in the home is committed by men. Women and their children are most often the victims.

Domestic violence is any behaviour used by one partner in an intimate relationship against the other which causes physical, sexual or psychological damage or causes the other to live in fear. Threats are a form of violence.

It is estimated approximately one in four women will be affected by domestic violence at some time in their lives. Domestic violence crosses all cultural, socioeconomic and religious groups.

## Domestic Violence and Pregnancy

Pregnancy is supposed to be a time of peace and safety. A time where the family turns its thoughts towards raising the next generation and growing a healthy baby. Unfortunately for many women, pregnancy can also be the beginning of domestic violence in their lives.

## Can pregnancy change an abusive partner?

It's unlikely. Experts say that pregnancy is more likely to have the opposite effect on an abusive partner. One out of five abused women report that her partner first abused her during pregnancy. Between 5 and 8 percent of pregnant women report suffering abuse during pregnancy.

Even if your partner seems to react positively to the news that you're pregnant, there is no guarantee that he won't become violent again at some point. If a man strikes his partner once, he's likely to do so again. Pregnancy can cause stress in any relationship, and it's a common trigger of domestic violence.

## What are the chances that my partner will harm my baby?

Abuse is dangerous not only to you but also to your baby, especially if you sustain a blow to the abdomen. Studies show that intimate partner violence during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of miscarriage, low birth weight babies, and fetal injury or even death.

Unfortunately, the situation isn't likely to get better once your baby is born. Babies and toddlers react to fear and aggression in their environment, this is displayed as excessive irritability, clinginess, sleeping and feeding problems.

## Warning Signs you may be in Danger

- Does your partner act like he is jealous of the baby?
- Does your partner threaten to take your baby when it is born?
- Does your partner try to harm your baby by striking, pushing, poking, or twisting your stomach?
- Does your partner prevent you from seeing your doctor or obstetrician?
- Does your partner question the paternity of the baby saying he is not the father?
- Does your partner call you names such as "stupid", "bitch", "fat", "ugly"?
- Does your partner check-up on you by calling, driving by, or getting someone else to?
- Does your partner blame you for his problems or his bad mood?
- Does your partner get angry so easily that you feel like you're "walking on eggshells"?
- Does your partner hit walls, drive dangerously, or do other things to scare you?
- Have you lost friends or no longer see some of your family because of your partner?
- Does your partner accuse you of being interested in someone else?
- Does your partner threaten to kill you or himself if you leave?