

Health Concerns

Research shows survivors of sexual and domestic violence are at risk of numerous health problems as a result of the repeated experiences of trauma. Trauma transforms into physical and mental symptoms because our bodies will express what cannot be verbalized. It can be helpful to understand the impact of violence has on your health or the health of your children. If you find you are experiencing any of these, consider contacting a professional.

Abuse/Violence Impacts to the Body and Mind

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| ☐ Headaches | ☐ Asthma |
| ☐ Irritable bowels or
Gastrointestinal illness | ☐ Heart palpitations or heart
disease |
| ☐ High blood pressure | ☐ Weakened immune system |
| ☐ Chronic fatigue | ☐ Chronic pain |
| ☐ Depression or mood disorders | ☐ Some forms of cancer |
| ☐ Anxiety disorders | ☐ Obesity |
| ☐ Rheumatoid arthritis | ☐ Substance Abuse |
| ☐ Sleep difficulties | ☐ Dissociation |

DV during pregnancy

Often, abuse and violence will begin during pregnancy, which can have devastating effects on the woman and the unborn. If you are pregnant and experiencing abuse, consider speaking to a professional.

During pregnancy, abuse escalates the risk of:

- Miscarriages
- Still births
- Premature delivery

Pregnant women are more like to:

- To have multiple sites of injury on her body
- More likely to be struck in the abdomen

After giving birth, the infant is more likely to have low birth weight:

- Have feeding problems
- Less likely to thrive

Repeated incidents of physical violence (repeated hits or kicks to the head, falling down stairs, or strangulation) can cause brain injury, which often is overlooked and undiagnosed by professionals, including doctors. If it is safe, speak with your doctor about your concerns and experiences of violence.

Brain Injury

Brain injury can affect:

- Thinking
- Memory
- Speech
- Learning

Brain injury can cause medical conditions such as:

- Epilepsy
- Mood swings
- Paralysis
- Depression
- Tremors
- Anger or aggression
- Fatigue

Strangulation/Choking

Symptoms of strangulation:

Voice changes

- ☐ Raspy or hoarse voice
- ☐ Coughing
- ☐ Unable to speak

Swallowing changes

- ☐ Trouble/painful swallowing
- ☐ Neck pain
- ☐ Nausea/vomiting
- ☐ Drooling

Breathing changes

- ☐ Difficulty breathing
- ☐ Hyperventilation
- ☐ Unable to breathe

Behavioural / Physical changes

- ☐ Restlessness or combativeness
- ☐ Hallucination
- ☐ Problems concentrating
- ☐ Memory loss
- ☐ Agitation
- ☐ Fainting/dizziness
- ☐ Post-traumatic stress syndrome
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Loss of bowel or bladder control