

what to expect project

Intimate Partner Violence and Pregnancy

The What to Expect Project educates, empowers, and advocates for all moms in need worldwide.

What is Intimate Partner Violence:

- Intimate partner violence (IPV) is abuse or aggression that occurs in a romantic relationship.
- IPV can vary in how often it happens and how severe it is.
- IPV occurs in all settings and among all socioeconomic, religious and cultural groups. The overwhelming global burden of IPV is borne by women.
- Although women can be violent in relationships with men, often in self-defense, and violence sometimes occurs in same-sex partnerships, the most common perpetrators of violence against women are male intimate partners or ex-partners.
- IPV can include any of the following types of behavior: physical, sexual, financial, and emotional violence, and stalking.



4.8 million

physical or sexual assault annually. However, the true prevalence of IPV is unknown because many victims are afraid to disclose their personal experiences of violence.

IPV Signs and Symptoms:

- **Emotional Violence:** humiliation, insults, or criticism, and can be just as harmful as physical violence to one’s sense of self-worth.
- **Psychological Violence** Psychological violence is another less observable example of IPV that involves intimidation, threats, and causing fear in one’s partner.
- Sexual violence can range from unwanted touching and sexual harassment to sexual assault or rape. Reproductive coercion is another type of sexual violence that many may not associate with IPV. This is when a partner tries to control the other’s reproductive choices, such as by banning their use of birth control
- Financial violence. This type takes the shape of financial control. A person may attempt to control their partner’s money or access to school or to their job. In doing so, the person can lead their partner to become completely dependent on them.

**Between 3%
& 9%**

Of women experience abuse during pregnancy

IPV and Pregnancy Key Facts

- Exposure to violence affects not only affects the **mother but also the fetus**, which is at greater risk than in other stages of life.
- **Adverse pregnancy outcomes of IPV include:** Increased risk of human immunodeficiency virus infection, perinatal depression, poor nutrition and inadequate weight gain during pregnancy, uterine rupture, hemorrhage, maternal death, prematurity, low birth weight, newborns small for gestational age, stillbirth, and reduced levels of breastfeeding.
- **TO TEACH** Women abused during pregnancy are twice as likely to miss prenatal care appointments or initiate prenatal care later than recommended. Insufficient prenatal care directly associates with adverse birth outcomes, including preterm delivery and low birth weight IPV can also be associated with having an unplanned pregnancy or an induced abortion in women.
- **TO BUILD** The significant impact of IPV on women’s health behaviors during pregnancy, can include higher rates of smoking, alcohol use, and substance abuse.



How to Seek Help

You are not alone. Sometimes being strong means asking for help. If you are experiencing IPV, free confidential 24/7 support is just a call or text away:

- **Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline** at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233). This is an anonymous 24/7 call hotline just for questions, safety planning, identifying resources, telling you about your rights, or and helping connect to safehouses and assistance. If you want to go to a shelter, the hotline can help you know where to go.
- **For Emergencies** Call 911
- **SAMHA's National Helpline** Call 1-800-662-4357 (HELP) or text 435748 (HELP4U). SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
- **SAMHSA's Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org
- **HHS National Maternal Health Hotline** Call or text 1-833-943-5746 (1-833-9-HELP4MOMS).

You are never alone.

National Domestic Violence Hotline advocates are here for you 24/7/365.

- **Call: 1.800.799.SAFE (7233)**
- **TTY: 1.800.787.3224**
- **Text: "START" to 88788**
- **Chat: thehotline.org**

Learn more about the What to Expect Project

For more information, please contact info@whattoexpectproject.org