
Effects of Abuse during Pregnancy

- * You may have anemia (too few red blood cells) because you are not eating right or getting enough vitamins and iron
 - * You may have bleeding during the first and second trimesters
 - * You may not gain enough weight during the pregnancy
 - * You may have more infections
 - * Your baby may be too small at birth or may be born too early
 - * Your baby may have problems after birth
 - * You may feel depressed
 - * You may feel anxious, upset, lonely and worthless
 - * You may not like yourself
 - * You may be at risk of unhealthy behaviors such as smoking or drug abuse and alcohol during pregnancy
 - * You may not receive important regular prenatal care.
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Safety Plan

- * Think of a safe place you and your children can go. Talk to someone you trust about your plans
- * Practice how to get out of your home safely through doors, windows, stairwells, elevators and fire escapes
- * Remove all weapons from the home if you can do this safely
- * Learn the phone numbers for police and shelters
- * Keep an extra set of car keys or money for a bus or cab in a safe place. Make sure you can get to them quickly

For help & information

Call
Social Services - 231-6556/225-6202
Family Welfare - 227-0129
Childcare and Protection Agency-227-0138

Or

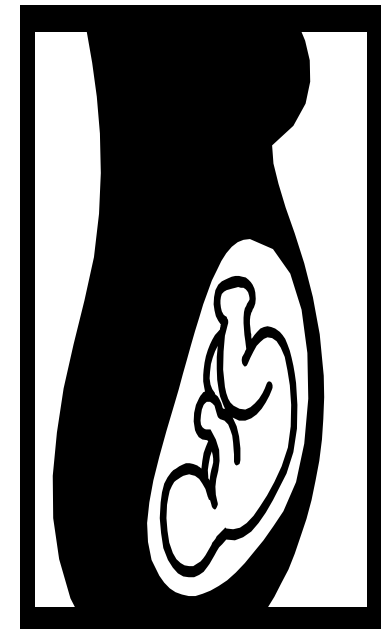
Help & Shelter
Homestretch Avenue, D'Urban Park,
Georgetown
Phone: 592 - 227 - 3454/225 - 4731
Fax: 227 - 8353
Email: hands@networksgy.com
Website: www.hands.org.gy

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HELP & SHELTER

Abuse in Pregnancy



Pre & Postnatal Mothers

Abuse During Pregnancy

Women in their childbearing years are at a higher risk of being abused, although women are abused at virtually any point in their lives. About 1 in 5 women suffer abuse when they are pregnant. The abuse can start during the pregnancy or may get worse. Women in their childbearing years are abused in ways that are linked to reproduction (including sexuality, conception, pregnancy, childbirth and parenting).

What is Abuse

Abuse includes physical hurt (e.g. slapping, punching etc.) , verbal hurt (e.g. name calling etc.), forced sex or to perform sex acts against your will and threats and control.

Why does abuse happen during pregnancy

Some reasons may include

- * Your partner is angry because pregnancy was unplanned
- * Your partner feels anxious and angry because the baby you are having has come too soon after the last baby
- * Your partner feels jealous of the baby
- * Competition for attention. The fetus is seen as an intruder into the relationship.
- * Financial concerns.
- * Loss of power and control. The partner may resent contact with others. Pregnancy may be a threat to a controlling, abusive partner who believes the woman could be influenced against him each time she sees a health care provider.
- * Dislike of physical and emotional pregnancy changes.

Abuse before Pregnancy

- * Sexual assault
- * Coercing her to have sex or refusing to engage in sex
- * Refusing to use, or to allow her to use contraception
- * Forcing her to use contraception
- * Refusing to use protection to prevent STDs

Abuse upon conception

- * Force her to have an abortion
- * Injure her with the intent of causing her to lose the baby
- * Injure her so that she has a miscarriage
- * Force her to continue an unwanted pregnancy

Abuse During Pregnancy

- * Start , continue or change the pattern of abuse
- * Control, limit, delay or deny her access to prenatal care
- * Use her pregnancy as a weapon in emotional abuse by:
 - Refusing sex
 - Denying responsibility for the child
 - Refusing to give support during pregnancy
 - Refusing to support her during the birth
- * Financially abuse her by refusing her access to money to buy food and supplies
- * Restrict her access to food
- * Threaten to leave her or report her as an unfit mother
- * Force her to work beyond her endurance during pregnancy

During Labour

- * Try to control decision making around the use or non-use of pain medication and/or other interventions
- * Demand that doctors restore the woman's vagina to the way it was before the birth
- * Make negative comments about the baby's gender when it is born

After the baby is born

- * Increase the amount of abuse
- * Denying her access to her newborn baby
- * Not supporting her or helping out after she comes home with the baby
- * Demanding sex soon after childbirth
- * Blaming her because the infant is the "wrong " sex
- * Sulking or trying to make her feel bad for time she spends with the baby
- * Putting down her parenting ability
- * Threatening to abduct the baby
- * Telling her she would never get custody of the baby
- * Making her stay at home with the baby
- * Preventing her from taking a job or making her take a job
- * Making or threatening to make false child abuse accusations against her
- * Withholding money
- * Blaming her for the baby's crying or other problems