

Safety Planning

PROTECTING YOURSELF AT HOME

Step 1: Prepare & Plan Ahead

- Hide important items such as keys, extra money, birth certificates, immigration papers, medical records and medication in a safe and accessible location in case you need to leave your home immediately.
- Get a cell phone with caller ID, voicemail, and have 911 on speed dial. Keep with you or hide in a safe location you can access in an emergency. Always check your caller ID, and 911 works as long as you have power.
- Alert neighbors to watch for any trouble or suspicious activity. Create an escape plan and identify a safe place you can go in the event you are attacked. Identify safe rooms that have locking doors and windows for escape. Avoid rooms with dangerous contents and no exits, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Step 2: Take Action

- Take a self-defense course.
- Get immediate medical attention if you've been attacked. Take photos of your bruises and injuries.

PROTECTING YOURSELF AT WORK AND OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

- Take different routes to work and/or school, and carpool whenever possible.
- Alert your employer to watch for your abuser. Notify security officers at work, and have someone escort you to your car. Have others around you at all times, and document all contact from your abuser.

Self-help

Women's Strength Self Defense Training
503-823-0260

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Police and Emergency

Emergency 911
Non-emergency Police Response in Mult. Co.
503-823-3333
DVERT (Domestic Violence Enhanced Response)
503-823-0090
Portland Police DV Reduction Unit (DVRU)
503-823-0090
Gresham Police Records (for DV detective)
503-618-2318
Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
503-255-3600
Multnomah County Probation DV Unit
503-988-5056
Multnomah County Jail Release Info.
503-988-3689
VINE (Jail/Prison/Corrections Info.)
1-877-OR-4-VINE (to track offender release status)

Financial and Legal Services

Dept. of Human Services Domestic Violence
Information line: 971-673-2748
Multnomah County District Attorney
503-988-3873 (Domestic Violence Unit)
Victim Assistance Program
503-988-3222 or 503-988-3270
Legal Aid's Domestic Violence Project
503-224-4086 (Legal representation for low-income petitioners with contested restraining order hearings in Multnomah County)
Volunteers Of America Court Care -
503-802-0036 (Call about free childcare at Multnomah County courthouse)

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YWCA of Greater Portland
1111 SW 10th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205
Yolanda House Crisis Line: 503.535.3269
www.ywca-pdx.org

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**STRANGULATION
IS A CRIME**

**What to Know Now,
How to Help**



**YWCA of Greater Portland General
Information**
Tel: 503.294.7400

WHAT IS STRANGULATION?

Strangulation, commonly referred to as “choking,” is a silent killer that occurs when pressure is placed on the throat or neck restricting blood circulation and breathing. When force is applied to the throat or neck, the airway, carotid arteries, and jugular veins are blocked off, leaving the victim at risk of death or brain damage.

Two types of strangulation are associated with domestic violence and/or sexual assault: (1) **Manual** strangulation—the perpetrator uses a part of his or her body to apply pressure on the victim’s neck; and (2) **Ligature** strangulation—the use of a ligature, such as cord or rope to block air flow. Both methods are extremely serious and can lead to permanent health problems and death.

While strangulation and choking are often used interchangeably, they are completely different things. Choking refers to accidental blockage of the windpipe caused by an object, such as food. Strangulation is intentional pressure on the throat and neck.

Strangulation is often not recognized as a serious act because its dangerous effects can be delayed. Be aware of the dangers now, before it’s too late: **Strangulation is never Okay!**

DANGEROUS EFFECTS OF STRANGULATION

Even when strangulation lasts for only a few seconds, the health repercussions can be devastating. A victim is unable to breathe, may see “stars,” and eventually loses consciousness as blood and oxygen supplies to the brain are impeded. The cartilage and bones in the throat can break or collapse instantly under the pressure. The victim is at a high risk of dying within hours, or days, if these structures are damaged.

Dangerous effects of strangulation include:

- Brain damage
- Severe pain in the neck and shoulder area
- Seizures, psychosis and amnesia
- Hoarseness, voice changes or the inability to speak
- Sore throat and/or difficulty swallowing
- Miscarriage
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Involuntary urination or defecation
- Restlessness, agitation or aggression
- Dizziness
- Death

IF YOU’VE BEEN STRANGLED

If you have been strangled, seek immediate medical attention—even if you don’t have any of these symptoms. Many of the effects of strangulation can take days to appear. Time is critical; seek medical attention, your life may depend on it!

HAS SOMEONE I KNOW BEEN STRANGLED?

If someone you know has been strangled, help them seek medical attention immediately. Injuries may not be visible, and bruising may not be visible for days. However, you may notice:

- Abrasions, scratches and/or redness on the neck and face
- Reddening in the whites of the eyes
- Difficulty breathing and/or hoarseness
- Broken capillaries around the eyes, neck or face

If you see any of these signs in someone you believe has been strangled, encourage them to seek medical attention immediately. Remember, a victim of strangulation may not be thinking clearly and may require help in seeking treatment. Be their voice during this time of crisis.