

**If you need help, please call...**

**National Domestic  
Violence Hotline**

1.800.799.SAFE or 1.800.799.7233

1.800.787.3224 (TTY)

[www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)

**National Dating Abuse Helpline**

Call or visit website for hours of operation.

1.866.331.9474

1.866.331.8453 (TTY)

[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Hotlines provide crisis intervention, information, referrals and safety planning. All hotlines are toll-free, confidential and anonymous and most operate 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

**Se habla Español**



**The Nevada Network Against  
Domestic Violence (NNADV)...**

...is a statewide organization that was formed in 1980 to work toward the elimination of domestic and sexual violence against all persons and the empowerment of women and children.

NNADV helps Nevada's communities respond creatively and effectively to the needs of domestic violence victims by providing information to service providers in the fields of domestic and sexual violence. In addition, NNADV provides education and advocacy to the general public and actively educates legislators on issues of concern to Nevada families.



**Nevada Network Against  
Domestic Violence**

250 South Rock Blvd. Suite 116  
Reno Nevada 89502

Phone: 775.828.1115

Fax: 775.828.9911

Website: [www.nnadv.org](http://www.nnadv.org)

**A program in your area:**



**Nevada Network Against  
Domestic Violence**

**Intimate  
Partner  
Violence:  
A Major  
Health Threat**



*"I went to my doctor for migraine headaches, chronic stomach pain and sleep disturbances, but I was too embarrassed to talk about the reasons for these symptoms. I wish he would have asked me about how my husband was treating me."*

This publication was designed for health care professionals. For a list of annotated materials for providers available in the NNADV Resource Library, contact the NNADV office.

# Intimate Partner Violence: A Major Health Threat



Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a health care issue of substantial proportions in the U.S. In 2002, the World Health Organization recognized IPV as a global public health concern.

## What is the impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) on health care?

- Each year, about 324,000 pregnant women in the U.S. are battered by their intimate partners. Homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant and postpartum women in the U.S., accounting for 31 percent of maternal injury deaths.
- In addition to injuries sustained during violent episodes, physical and psychological abuse are linked to a number of adverse physical effects including arthritis, chronic neck or back pain, migraine and other frequent headaches, stammering, problems in seeing, sexually transmitted infections, chronic pelvic pain, and stomach ulcers.
- The costs of intimate partner violence exceeded \$5.8 billion in 1995. Updated to 2003 dollars, that's more than \$8.3 billion.
- A study published in 2003, found that 44 percent of victims of IPV talked to someone about the abuse; 37 percent talked to their health care provider.

Source: "The Facts on Health Care and Domestic Violence." Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund), [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org).

The U.S. Office on Violence Against Women defines IPV as a "pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner." It can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender, and it takes many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic, and psychological abuse.

## How does intimate partner violence affect the health of my patients?

[\(CDC 2011 Fact Sheet\)](#)

- Many victims suffer physical injuries. They may range from minor bruises, cuts, or scratches to more serious injuries that can cause disabilities or even death.
- IPV can also cause emotional harm. Victims may have trauma symptoms. This includes flashbacks, panic attacks, and trouble sleeping. Victims may have a hard time trusting others and being in relationships. Some victims may try to cope with their trauma in unhealthy ways such as smoking, drinking, taking drugs, or having risky sex.
- In addition to the immediate trauma caused by abuse, IPV contributes to a number of chronic health problems, including depression, alcohol and substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and often limits the ability of victims to manage other chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension.



## What can I do as a health care professional to help a patient...

Medical professionals can make a difference in the lives of those who experience abuse. You are in a unique position to recognize and address exposure to abuse in your patients. You can empower, believe and listen to them, and refer them to appropriate services.

Consider the following:

- Learn more about IPV and its effects on health care. Ask all patients about physical, sexual and psychological abuse as part of their medical history and inquire upon each visit.
- **Clinical studies have proven the effectiveness of a private, confidential, two-minute screening for early detection of abuse in pregnant women. Other studies have tested a 10-minute intervention that was proven highly effective in increasing their safety.**
- Reproductive providers should be aware of the dangers of IPV during pregnancy. IPV may be amplified during this time or there may be evidence of birth control sabotage.
- Remember **RADAR**: **R**outinely screen all patients, **A**sk direct questions, **D**ocument your findings, **A**ssess patient safety, and **R**eview options and referrals.
- For more information on IPV and health care, to order RADAR cards for your staff and patient education brochures, contact the NNADV office.
- For a list of all advocacy programs in Nevada providing services to victims of IPV, visit the NNADV website [www.nnadv.org](http://www.nnadv.org).