



Protecting Against Sexual Assault



Sexual assault, most often in the form of rape, can happen to anyone. To stay safe, always be cautious and aware of your surroundings. Sexual assaults are serious and violent crimes, not the expression of uncontrolled passion.

- Be aware of locations and situations where assaults may occur and avoid them as much as possible.
- If you feel uncomfortable about a person or location, leave immediately.
- Observe details about suspicious persons. Taking note of a person's size, coloring, hairstyle, facial hair, scars, tattoos, or accent can help you give a good description.
- List only your initials and last name in the telephone directory or on a mailbox.
- Install a peephole in your front door and never open the door for strangers.
- Avoid traveling alone and keep a cell phone nearby to dial 9-1-1 in case of emergency.
- Report any incident immediately if you are the victim of sexual assault.

Preventing Abduction

- Don't play in deserted areas -- such as empty playgrounds, parks, construction sites or dumps.
- Stay with your mom or dad in public places or use the buddy system. Play, walk, bike and skate with a friend.
- If you are out somewhere with an adult and you lose them, don't go looking for them. If you are in a store, go to the cashier or security guard and ask for help. If you can't find a cashier or security guard and you are in trouble, look for a woman with small children for help.
- Stay alert and trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, like you think someone is following you, you are probably right. Try to notice if an adult is hanging around your school playground, your park or yard, and then go to where you know you can find other people.
- If you think someone is following you, cross the street and go into a store. Tell a police officer or a mother with a child. Don't try to hide -- go to where you know you can find other people.

- If someone tries to grab you, kick, punch and yell: "NO! I don't know you! You aren't my Mom (or Dad)!"
- If the person is in a car, stay as far away from the car as you can. Go into a store or turn around, and walk or run in the opposite direction the car is going.
- **NEVER, ever hitchhike or accept a ride from someone. Don't go near a stranger's car. NEVER get into a car with someone you don't know, for any reason. Sometimes people use tricks -- like saying your mom is hurt, or they lost their dog or kitten -- to try and get you to go with them. DO NOT GO WITH THEM!**
- If someone does manage to get you in their car, do not put on your seatbelt. Jump out when you see people and the car has to make a stop.

If you are trapped in an abductor's car:

- Don't sit there quietly. The person is taking you somewhere and wants to hurt you.
- If the car has back doors, try to scramble quickly to the back seat while the car is moving.
- Try to jump out of a car that is going slow or has to stop. Try to open a window and scream.
- Try to reach over and blow the horn, or grab the steering wheel. Scream as loud as you can while you do this.
- If the car is stopped or slowed behind another car, reach over with your foot and quickly stomp on the gas pedal as hard and as long as you can.
- This is a time you will be much safer if you cause an accident than if you behave.

Safety at Home

- Many kids get home before their parents. If you come home before your mom or dad, make sure the first thing you do is call and let your mom or dad know you got home okay.
- If you come home and a window in your house is broken or a door is open that shouldn't be, don't go in. Go to a trusted neighbor, or find a phone and call 911.
- If you have to stay after school or want to play or study with a friend, tell your mom or dad.
- Don't leave your home without asking your mom or dad first. Make sure a parent knows where you are going and for how long. Always tell your mom or dad where you will be and when you will be home.
- When your family is home and the doorbell rings, always find out who it is and ask your mom or dad before you open the door.

- If you are home alone, never open the door -- unless you can see that it is a relative or a specific person who your mom or dad said would come over to stay with you.
- **NEVER tell someone you are home alone, whether they call on the phone or come by your house. Ask your mom or dad what they would like you to say, like: "My Dad's in the shower, can he call you when he gets out?"**
- **NEVER give information to anyone over the phone about yourself, your family or where you live. Hang up on anyone who calls to bother you or who says bad things on the phone.**
- Ask your mom or dad for permission to go outside of your play area or yard or to go into someone's home.
- If you have a babysitter that hits you, touches you or makes you play games that embarrass you, tell a trusted adult, even if the babysitter told you not to.
- Keep all the windows and doors in your home locked.
- If someone tries to break into your home, call **911 immediately and give them your full address, including your apartment number if you have one. Tell them that you are at home and someone is trying to break in. Then, try calling a neighbor you know is usually home. If you can get out of the house, get out. If you can hide, hide.**