

# Adolescents and Dating Violence

**D**ating violence is physical, sexual, or psychological violence within a dating relationship. Examples include hitting or punching, forced sexual contact, or threats of violence.

About 10% to 20% of high school teenagers are physically injured by a dating partner each year.

Adolescent dating violence is associated with

- Intimate partner violence (partner abuse) in adulthood
- Injuries and other health risk behaviors such as unsafe sex, substance use, and suicide risk

Unlike adult intimate partner violence, rates of being the abuser are similar for adolescent boys and girls.

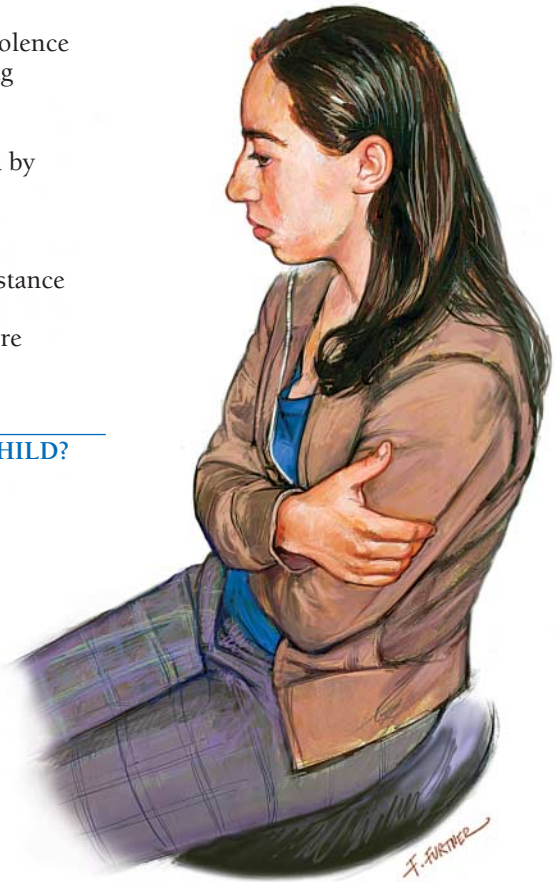
## HOW DO I RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF DATING ABUSE IN MY CHILD?

A teenager experiencing dating violence may:

- Retreat from school or activities
- Show signs of depression
- Isolate themselves from friends
- Make changes in daily routine or clothing style

Recommendations for parents who are concerned about dating abuse with their child:

- Ask questions about your teenager's life and relationships.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Support your teenager as they make decisions about their relationships.
- Be calm and take positive action.



## PREVENTION OF ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE

- Recognize key times, such as when your child starts high school, to talk with them about healthy relationships.
- Maintain open lines of communication with your child about their dating relationships.
- Talk openly with your child about expectations for dating relationships, including clear messages that physical, sexual, or threatened harm is not normal or acceptable.
- Encourage schools to incorporate education about healthy relationships. A study in this month's *Archives* found that teaching youth about healthy relationships and ways to avoid physical dating violence in high school health classes reduced physical dating violence, even years later, among adolescent boys.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline:  
<http://www.loveisrespect.org/>

Source to raise awareness and prevent digital dating abuse among teens:  
<http://www.thatnotcool.com>

Family Violence Prevention Fund:  
<http://endabuse.org/section/programs/teens>

## INFORM YOURSELF

To find this and other Advice for Patients articles, go to the Advice for Patients link on the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* Web site at <http://www.archpediatrics.com>.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5519a3.htm>

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