

## SEX AGAINST YOUR WILL . . . BY SOMEONE YOU KNOW

### ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

At least one-third of all reported rape victims know their attacker - he was a date, steady boy friend, or casual friend. This is called "acquaintance" rape, and it probably happens to teenage girls and young women more than any other age group.

It's hard to think of someone familiar as a rapist, and this familiarity makes you less willing to trust your self-protective instincts. Also, acquaintance rapists use psychological pressures, as well as physical force. Being forced into having sex - even if it's by someone you know - is still rape and it's a crime. Nothing you do, say, or wear gives a boy or man the right to assault you - sexually or otherwise.



### SOME SUGGESTIONS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

When you first date someone you don't know well, check him out with friends. Plan to meet someplace where there are other people - a restaurant, a movie, a mall - or go with a group of friends.

Be prepared to find your own transportation home. Carry change for a phone call to your parents or a friend and enough cash for a taxi.



Don't get drunk or stoned. Remember drugs and alcohol decrease your ability to take care of yourself and make sensible decisions.

Clearly and firmly, let your date know your limits before you get into a situation you can't control.

Don't leave a party, a concert, or a ball game with someone you just met.

Trust your instincts. If you think something's not quite right or you feel uneasy, get to where there are other people or tell your date to leave - now. Be assertive.

### CAN I FIGHT BACK?

Because each situation is different, no one can list actions that are guaranteed to protect against acquaintance rape. But here are some tactics to think about.

Be assertive. Say no firmly, even if he tries to make you feel guilty, unpopular, or babyish.

If that doesn't work, be rude!

Make noise. Talk loudly, scream, honk the car's horn.

Turn him off by acting crazy, saying you have a venereal disease or threatening to throw up.

Try to get away and call your parents or friends to come get you.

If all else fails, you can resort to physical resistance - a swift jab to the throat or eyes or a solid kick in the knees.

### WHAT IF IT HAPPENS TO ME?

Don't feel guilty and don't just try to forget about it. You didn't ask to be raped. Any rape is a violent attack that can have traumatic effects on the victim for months and even years afterward.

The single most important action you can take is to tell someone - your parents, the police, a school counselor, the family doctor, or any adult you trust. Call your community's rape hotline or crisis center. It is often listed in the telephone book under rape, community crisis center, or sexual assault. The telephone operator can help you.

Go to a doctor, hospital emergency room, or local women's clinic to be tested for venereal disease and pregnancy.

All rape victims usually feel rage, guilt, anger, and helplessness. The best way to handle these emotions and get back in charge of your life is to talk with sympathetic friends and family or counselors from the rape crisis center, mental health agency, or a women's clinic.

### WHO CAN HELP?

Even if you don't have this problem, someone you know may. Find out about the services in your community that help victims of rape and incest. Some places to look besides the police are rape crisis centers, community mental health centers, school counselors, women's clinics, legal aid agencies, and social service agencies.

**INCEST—  
THE MOST  
FUNDAMENTAL  
VIOLATION  
OF TRUST**

Incest is more difficult to talk about than rape, but it happens to at least 100,000 children and teens each year. The most common kind of incest is sex between an older family member - a parent, stepparent, uncle, or cousin - and a child or teenager. Most victims are girls, although it can happen to boys as well.

Incest occurs through persuasion and pressure more often than by physical violence. It becomes a closely held secret, continuing for years. The victims feel shame, anger, and guilt and usually believe they must handle the situation alone. Incest victims who have to depend on their abusers for food and shelter tell themselves it won't happen again, or worry about sending their father, stepfather, uncle, or brother to jail.

The best way to stop incest is to tell someone you trust and who will believe you. This can be very, very difficult and parents or

relatives may say you are lying or that you caused the assault. Keep reminding yourself that incest is not an expression of love and that you have the right not to be touched sexually by anyone against your will. Keep telling until someone believes you.

Running away or getting married to escape the situation are never solutions, but only create new problems all their own.

Persons who commit incest - and their victims - can only be helped when the problem is out in the open. Although incest is a criminal offense, the abuser usually is not jailed, but is ordered to get psychiatric help. Many law enforcement agencies work with mental health and social service agencies to stop the incest, protect the victim, and help all members of the family.



*Crime Prevention tips from:*  
**The National Crime Prevention Council**  
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John H. Rutledge".



*Help me, McGruff*

**TAKE A BITE OUT OF  
CRIME®**

**BEING FORCED  
INTO HAVING SEX  
—EVEN IF IT'S  
BY SOMEONE YOU  
KNOW—  
IS RAPE AND IT'S  
A CRIME.**

