

Rape Prevention Measures

Defense Against Rape:

- Get your mindset in advance that if something happens you will stay in control of yourself long enough to take a fast offense to free yourself to get away, even if it means hurting the attacker.
- If you are accosted, strike out immediately at the assailant's most vulnerable spots: eyes, nose, throat, groin, knees, and/or toes. Gouge and hit, and do it hard. Try not to wear restrictive clothing and if you are wearing high heels kick them off so that you will have better stability to fight off your assailant.
- Use your natural weapons: fingernails, fists, feet, elbows, and teeth.
- Don't wait for the assailant to recover from your initial offense. Strike fast and get away fast.
- Be wary of using guns, knives or tear gas canisters since the assailant may have his own weapons or take yours away and turn them on you.

Avoiding Rape:

- Be aware, be calm, and be suspicious.
- Never hitchhike or pick up hitchhikers.
- Avoid dark streets, high and dense bushes, and out-of-the-way places.
- Park in well lit areas. Keep your doors locked while in the car. Check back seat of car before getting in.
- Don't have both arms full of books or packages when you're out. Keep one arm free, and have keys ready as you approach your locked home, office, or car door.
- If you see something or someone suspicious when you're walking, turn away from them and go to the nearest group of people, or at least to a lighted area.
- Avoid being alone in apartment laundry rooms or Laundromats
- Leave lights on inside and out when you are away from your house during evening hours.
- When you're home, keep doors and accessible windows locked.
- Have a one-way viewer on your doors so you can see out, and don't open your door to strangers.

Detecting Sexual Abuse

As we know, child rearing practices and standards of childcare vary widely around the world. Over the years, there have been several situations where Foreign Service children have been sexually overstimulated or abused by household staff (for example, gardeners, chauffeurs, household help, nannies, recreation aides, or baby sitters). Whether or not these actions were malicious or inadvertent is not the issue at hand. Rather, we all need to be more aware of these possibilities and teach prevention skills to our children. This awareness will enable us to help our children defend themselves and be prepared to inform us about any unfortunate overtures before they recur. Then we can get help for that child in order to minimize any long-term consequence in his or her life.

Sometimes even the best parent cannot prevent bad things from happening to his or her child. It is fine to warn your child about not going with "strangers," but more than half of all sexual abuse cases of both boys and girls (in the United States) occur between children and a male grown-up whom the child's parents know well and may like. In certain parts of the world, same-sex contact may be more or less culturally condoned, sexual contact with children may be less taboo, and certain ways of stroking or comforting infants and young children are sexually overstimulating by our standards.

Young children usually do not lie about or make up the fact that they have been abused. On the other hand, parents do not always believe a child who tries with a limited vocabulary to tell you about an experience he or she doesn't fully understand.

Listen and watch your children at play. Supervise their activities and monitor all household staff and baby sitters. Knowledge of the possible changes a child might experience as a result of molestation gives parents an edge

and ensures that these symptoms don't go unnoticed. Remember that no single sign is proof that there has been abuse; but given groups of signals, you should be alerted that something might be wrong.

Physical signs of possible sexual abuse include vaginal discharge; bloody underpants; pain and itching in the genital area or genital injuries; difficulty walking or sitting.

Possible changes in behavior could include:

- * Sleep disturbances-nightmares, bed-wetting, fear of sleeping, and tiredness from lack of restful sleep.
- * Eating problems-loss of appetite, obesity, swallowing problems.
- * Fear of certain people or places.
- * Excessive masturbation.
- * Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawing, or friends.
- * Withdrawal, "clinginess," fear of separation.

Behavior changes could have other causes; so while it's important to be observant, try not to look for what may not be there. Consult your medical officer when in doubt.

If you discover your child has been sexually abused, you will experience shock, outrage, and disbelief that such an experience has happened to your child. However, it is important that you try not to react too strongly, because your child's ability to cope with the abuse depends largely on how you react to the knowledge.

Most children don't tell about sexual abuse because they are afraid they will be blamed, disbelieved, or even rejected by you. To protect themselves, and you, preschoolers often minimize the experience, repress the incident, and deny the pain. Your care in underacting

and assuring your child you believe and still love and trust her or him is key to their healing.

What your child needs most at this critical time are your comfort, your love, your support, and your reassurance that she or his is still OK-and that you're not angry with him or her.

Underplay your own valid emotions of rage and injury.

If you suspect your child has been sexually abused, contact your medical unit and RSO immediately. Appropriate help is available and can minimize the long-term effects of any unfortunate incidents in your child's life.

Sexual Assault Prevention

AT HOME

- * Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well lighted.
- * Install and use a peephole in the door. One third of all rapes occur in the victim's residence.
- * Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting him in.
- * Don't let any stranger in when you are home alone-no matter what the reason or how dire the emergency is supposed to be. Offer to make an emergency phone call while they wait outside.
- * Never give the impression that you are at home alone if a stranger telephones or comes to the door.
- * Get to know your neighbors-someone you can turn to if you're worried.
- * If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.
- * If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

WHILE WALKING

- * Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- * Stay in well-lit areas.
- * Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.
- * Walk in the middle of the sidewalk. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- * Wear clothes and shoes that give you

freedom of movement.

- * Don't walk alone at night and always avoid areas where there are few people.
- * Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too close to the car.
- * If you are in trouble, attract help in any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"
- * If you feel you're being followed, don't go home; go to a safe place.

WHILE DRIVING

- * Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- * Park in well-lit areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- * When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.
- * Drive with all the doors locked.
- * Never pick up hitchhikers.
- * Always walk, drive, and park your car in well-lit areas.
- * Walk in the middle of the sidewalk. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- * Walk to your car with keys in your hand.
- * If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe, well-lit and well-traveled area.
- * If you have car trouble, raise the hood, and stay inside your car. If a stranger wants to help, have him or her call for help. Don't leave your car

IF YOU ARE ATTACKED

Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.

It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.

Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options to not resisting are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention, and physical resistance.

You may be able to turn the attacker off with bizarre behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or picking your nose.

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Diplomatic Security**



Sexual Assault

Reducing the Risk and
Coping with an Attack

DEPARTMENT OF STATE PUBLICATION
10184
Released August 1994

Reduce the Risk of Becoming a Rape Victim

At Home

Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well-lighted.

Install and use a peephole in the door.

Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting him in.

Don't let any stranger in when you are home alone—no matter what the reason or how dire the emergency is supposed to be. Offer to make an emergency phone call while they wait outside.

Never give the impression that you are at home alone if a stranger telephones or comes to the door.

Get to know your neighbors—someone you can turn to if you're worried.

If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.

If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call Post 1 or the RSO.

While Walking

Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.

Stay in well-lit areas.

Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.

Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.

Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.

Don't walk alone at night and always avoid areas where there are few people.

Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too close to the car.

If you are in trouble, attract help in any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"

If you feel you're being followed, don't go home; go to a safe place.

While Driving

Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.

Park in well-lit areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.

When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.

Drive with all the doors locked.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe, well-lit and well-traveled area.

If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, and put on the flashers. Use flares if you have them, and tie a white cloth to the antenna. If someone stops to help, don't get out of the car but roll down the window slightly and ask the person to call a tow service for you.

Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.

If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest safe place where you can call Post 1 or the RSO. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.

If You Are Attacked

Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.

It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.

Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options to not resisting are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention, and physical resistance.

You may be able to turn the attacker off with bizarre behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or picking your nose.

After an Assault or Rape

Go to a safe place and call Post 1 or the RSO. The sooner you make the report, the greater the chances the attacker will be caught.

Do not shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any of the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault. Do not disturb anything in the area where the assault occurred. It is important to preserve all physical evidence for court use.

Go to your medical unit and get medical care. Make sure you are evaluated for the risks of pregnancy and venereal disease.

Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone.

Write down a description of the attacker and the assault. The RSO needs all the information you know about the attack and assailant.

Help is available to assist you in dealing with the consequences of an assault. Victims of assault suffer emotional and

psychological trauma. It is important to realize that, no matter how strong a person you are, you cannot go through this alone. Get counseling! Contact your mission's medical unit or the security office, where personnel have been trained to deal with this crime.

Take Action—Today

Practice being alert and observant. You can avoid many threatening situations; and if you are attacked, you will be able to accurately describe the assailant to the authorities.

Find out if your mission has scheduled training on rape awareness. If not, request it.

If someone you know has been attacked, be a good friend. Lend an ear and lead them to others who can help.

RAPE . . . Do YOU Know the Facts?

Rape is one of the most underreported crimes. For every reported rape, an estimated 10 to 20 rapes go unreported.

Myth: Rape is motivated by sexual desire.

Fact: Rape is an act of violence not sexual passion. It is an attempt to hurt and humiliate, using sex as the weapon.

Myth: Most women are raped by strangers in high-risk situations—hitchhiking, walking alone at night, going alone to a bar.

Fact: Rapes can happen in these situations but, in the United States, about one-third of all victims are attacked in their homes.

Myth: Rapes are committed by total strangers.

Fact: 70 percent of all rapists were known to female victims.

Myth: Women invite rape by dressing seductively.

Fact: Victims do not cause rape. It can happen to anyone—children, grandmothers, students, working women, mothers, wives, the rich, the poor, and even men. Police believe that in the stranger-rape situation, rapists tend to prey on women who look frightened, easily intimidated, or seem to be daydreaming. In other words, rape victims often are in the wrong place at the wrong time.