



# Advocate for DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SCREENING.

## Tips for talking to healthcare providers.

Domestic violence may be a hidden issue, but it's one of the most critical public health issues, affecting millions of Americans. The effects are wide-ranging and long-lasting. New findings indicate that domestic violence results in serious chronic health conditions, with a devastating impact on women.

### What is domestic violence?

Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that include inflicted physical injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation and threats.

These behaviors are perpetrated by someone who is, was, or wishes to be involved in an intimate dating relationship with an adult or adolescent, and are aimed at establishing control by one partner over the other.

### **CALL TO ACTION: RAISE AWARENESS AND SHARE WITH OTHERS THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS SCREENING PATIENTS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING ROUTINE EXAMS.**

- Following are some tips/pointers that are designed to help you speak about domestic violence screening with a healthcare professional. "Recently I heard that as many as one-third of American women are abused at some point in their lives, and that routine screening of all female patients for domestic violence by physicians is a great way to help connect victims or survivors to resources. I've noticed that you have never asked me about it. Would you consider routine screening of your patients to help ensure they are not abused or to help them get help if they are?"
- "I noticed that you asked whether I drink or smoke, but you didn't ask if I'm in a safe relationship. I'm curious, if I were being abused, would you know where to refer me for help in our community? I ask because I understand one in three women is in an abusive relationship. I understand every state has a local domestic violence hotline and other support resources, and that information is available from the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1.800.799.SAFE (1.800.799.7233)**. I'd love to see some posters or flyers with that helpful information in your office. What do you think?"
- Go to <http://vz.to/chronichealthanddv>, and print a copy of "Domestic Violence and the Role of the Health Care Provider" and bring it with you to your next exam. "I saw this and thought you may find the information of interest. Recently I learned about the importance of doctors routinely screening their female patients for domestic violence, and it occurred to me that I don't recall that you have asked me if I am safe in my relationship. I believe this research provides some great insights for you to better screen all of your patients. I hope you find it useful."
- "I recently heard about a survey that found that there is a link between chronic health conditions and domestic violence. Is it possible that any of your patients may be experiencing chronic pain as the result of domestic violence?"

More information on domestic violence awareness and prevention is available at <http://vz.to/chronichealthanddv> or Futures Without Violence (<http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>). Feel free to provide this information to your healthcare provider.

SOURCE: Exploring the Relationship Between Domestic Violence and Chronic Health Conditions, GfK Custom Research, 2013. The Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2010.

**75%**  
OF WOMEN SAY THEY  
HAVE NEVER BEEN  
SCREENED FOR DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE BY A DOCTOR  
OR NURSE

**ONLY  
6%**  
OF WOMEN WITH CHRONIC  
HEALTH CONDITIONS AND A  
HISTORY OF ABUSE BELIEVE  
THEIR DOCTOR/NURSE HAS  
EVER MADE A CONNECTION  
BETWEEN THE TWO

### **IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEEK HELP.**

For more information on local domestic violence resources, you can call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)** at **1.800.799.SAFE (1.800.799.7233)** round-the-clock. NDVH counselors also can work with you by phone, via text or online through instant messaging to provide you with information and resources, including finding you a shelter to stay safe if needed.

