

STRANGULATION OR SUFFOCATION

Strangulation is a serious crime. It can mean that violence is getting worse. It is the most lethal form of domestic violence.

What is strangulation?

You might think of this as choking.

Strangulation happens when pressure is placed around the neck area with enough force that breathing becomes difficult or impossible. The pressure around the neck can take many forms, either one or both hands, rope, clothing or anything else.

What is suffocation?

Suffocation happens by covering of the mouth or nose, preventing air from entering your lungs.

Why is suffocation and strangulation dangerous?

When strangulation or suffocation occurs, your brain can't get oxygen. The blood flow can't exit your brain and your airway closes. When this happens breathing is impossible or very difficult.

Each time that blood and air flow to and from your brain stops, your brain cells will die. Brain cells do not regenerate once this happens. This can cause long term health issues. Even if it only happens for a short time and there are no visible injuries, there might be serious internal injuries.

More information and help

In an emergency, call the police on 000 or 112 from mobiles.

For information, court advocacy and referral for women in domestic violence situations and assistance with getting and ADVO call the **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service** on **1800 WDVCAS** or **1800 938 227**.

For legal advice, assistance, referral and representation as well as social work support and financial counselling for victims of domestic and family violence call the **Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Unit** on **9219 6300**.

Family Violence Law Help is a website with easy-to-understand legal information about AVOs, family law and child protection. The information can be translated into different languages.

www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au

This factsheet is a general guide to the law. You should not rely on it for legal advice and we recommend that you talk to a lawyer about your situation. The information is correct at the time of publication, however it may change.

This factsheet is an excerpt from the booklet Charmed and Dangerous: A woman's guide to reclaiming a healthy relationship, an initiative of the Tweed Shire Women's Services Inc.

This factsheet is available in Arabic, Dari/Farsi, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.  © Legal Aid NSW

When an act of violence like this happens, you may feel relieved that you survived. Over time, you may start to minimise the experience. This level of violence places you at high risk of losing your life. There may not be a next time if you do not get help.

What should I do?

It is important that you do something if an act of violence like this happens to you.

You should:

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible
- Tell someone like a support worker, the police, or a doctor
- Document signs and symptoms. You might notice that some things may develop over days or weeks:
 - › Difficulty breathing, talking or swallowing
 - › Any neck or throat pain; including coughing
 - › Vomiting or nausea
 - › Any loss of bladder or bowel control
 - › Ringing in your ears, dizziness or headaches
 - › Any memory loss
 - › Confusion, feeling disoriented, restless or tired.