

HOW TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST RAPE

If you are a female, chances are one-in-ten that you will be a victim of sexual assault. The attacker makes no distinction between age, race, appearance or any other characteristic. You are more likely to become a victim because of the way you walk and talk.

Common sense is your best defense against attack. Because every rape is different, there's no one solution for thwarting an attack. Keep in mind that the attacker must have the *opportunity* and privacy to be able to assault you.

Be aware of your surroundings. Walk and talk with confidence. Don't *look* or *act* like a victim. Have a plan in mind of what you will do if you are ever attacked. Carry a pepper sprayer on your key chain and learn how to use it effectively.

If you are attacked, evaluate the situation and look for ways to escape. Some women have avoided rape by talking their way out of it, by acting crazy or by fighting back. A kick in the groin isn't usually successful because men instinctively protect this area, and you may lose your balance.

If you decide to respond physically, remember that your first priority is to get away. Don't be afraid to do anything necessary to accomplish this. (Don't worry about hurting him.) Your safety and escape are of the utmost importance. Act quickly and decisively to throw the attacker off guard while you escape. Never go with him to a second location.

After an attack:

- A. Go to a safe place.
- B. Call the police.

- C. Preserve evidence—don't change your clothes or disturb the scene of the crime.
- D. Get medical care.
- E. Contact your nearest rape crisis center.

Medical attention is vital! Many hospitals provide free care for rape victims and offer venereal disease treatment. Remember, even if you do get treatment immediately, follow-up tests for V.D. are essential.

Never be embarrassed because of the incident. Though difficult to talk about, it is important to tell doctors what sex acts took place so they will know what medical attention is needed.

Try to remember in detail, your exact experience for police records. Give an accurate and complete description of your assailant. This is extremely important! Your complete cooperation with local authorities may help in preventing similar attacks on other girls and women.