



# Information for victims of strangulation

## What do we mean by strangulation?

Strangulation is where there is pressure on the neck. Sometimes this is described as choking or being grabbed by the neck – this could be by a hand or hands on the neck, being put in a headlock or by something wrapped tight around the neck, like a scarf, belt or rope.

Pressure to the neck can lead to less oxygen getting to the brain and there is a risk to life every time it is done.

**There is no safe way to be strangled** and whether you have been strangled once or one hundred times, whether it was today or many years ago, it is never too late to speak to someone. You will never be wasting anyone's time.

In England and Wales strangulation is a criminal offence.

## Signs & symptoms

At the time of being strangled:

- Pain in your neck
- Difficulty or pain with breathing and swallowing
- Eye problems – seeing stars, blurred or loss of vision (sight)
- Hearing problems – loss of hearing, or a ringing, popping or roaring noise
- Unconsciousness
- Loss of control of your bladder or bowel so that you wet or soil yourself.



After strangulation:

- Pain in your neck
- Difficulty or pain with breathing and swallowing
- Confusion, feeling agitated
- Voice changes, such as a husky or deep voice
- Headache, feeling sick or being sick.

Only 50% of people who are strangled will have any injury to the neck or head that can be seen. Lack of injury does not mean that the attack was less serious or less dangerous or that it will be easy to 'get over' psychologically.

## You are not to blame

Some people who have been strangled feel embarrassed or feel that they are to blame. This is never the case.

## When to seek help?

Strangulation is dangerous and can lead to death very quickly. **If you have been a victim of strangulation you should get medical help as soon as possible even** if you are not sure about reporting to the police.

## Make a record

Whether you have reported the strangulation to the police or seen a doctor about it or not, it will still be useful for you to keep a record of any symptoms or injuries that you notice.

## General advice

Being a victim of strangulation is a very stressful experience. It is normal to have physical and emotional symptoms afterwards. This is not just because you have been through a life threatening attack, but also if you have been to hospital, had contact with the police and other professionals such as social workers. This will be physically and mentally draining and stressful and you should seek support from others such as your GP. You will need to give yourself time to recover. This should include resting physically and emotionally and listen to what your body is telling you.

[Click here for more information](#)

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