

Strangulation vs. Choking

- ◆ Choking and strangulation are often thought to be the same, but they are different.
- ◆ Choking is when something like a candy gets stuck in your breathing tube (wind pipe). This may stop the air going into your lungs.
- ◆ Strangulation (strangling) is when something presses or squeezes on your neck. The squeezing may stop the blood supply going to your brain, or it may stop the air going to your lungs. It may make you lose consciousness (black out) and stop breathing.
- ◆ Being strangled may cause you serious health problems. It may damage your brain causing difficulty with thinking and memory and may cause you to have a stroke. If you are pregnant you are at risk of losing your baby.

(Adapted with permission from: VON Canada)



If you have symptoms, please go to the nearest medical clinic, emergency department, or call 911



PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc.

PO Box 964

Charlottetown PE, C1A 7M4

fvps.ca

Strangulation

Information for Victims of Strangulation



Signs of Strangulation

- ◆ Hoarse or raspy voice
- ◆ Pain when swallowing or a “thick” feeling in your throat
- ◆ Breathing problems
- ◆ Cough
- ◆ Loss of consciousness (blacking out)
- ◆ Pain in your neck or throat
- ◆ Vomiting (throwing up)
- ◆ Memory problems, confusion, restlessness or agitation
- ◆ Scratch marks or bruises around your neck
- ◆ Bruises or swelling inside your lips
- ◆ Tiny red blood spots on your face and neck or around your eyes
- ◆ Whites of your eyes are blood red
- ◆ Loss of control of bowel or bladder
- ◆ Ringing in your ears
- ◆ You may be seriously injured even if you can’t see any marks (medical attention may be warranted)

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How Can I Prove that I’ve Been Strangled

Some people may not believe you have been strangled because they do not see any marks on your face or neck. It is important to know that:

- ◆ 50% of strangulation victims have NO external signs of injury and only 15% of strangulation victims have external injuries sufficient to photograph.

(Strack G, et al. (2001). J Emerg Med, 21 (3), 301-309.)

Putting it into perspective:

- ◆ 11 lbs of pressure occludes the blood vessels
- ◆ 20 lbs of pressure opens a can of pop
- ◆ 33 lbs of pressure occludes the trachea

If someone doesn’t believe that you have been strangled, show them this brochure; it may help them understand the signs and risks of strangulation

REMEMBER

If you have been strangled and are having any signs of strangulation, please go to the nearest medical clinic or emergency room.

Facts About Strangulation

- ◆ Strangulation is high risk and potentially lethal
- ◆ Strangulation is much more serious than being punched or slapped
- ◆ Strangulation may cause a variety of serious medical conditions with symptoms lasting for weeks after the event
- ◆ Strangulation is a sign that your abuser has become more dangerous and you could be injured or even killed
- ◆ Death from strangulation can occur within 4-5 minutes
- ◆ In 50% of all strangulations, children see, hear or know what is happening
- ◆ Children who see or hear a parent being strangled believe strangling is normal
- ◆ Children who witness strangulation have a higher rate of aggression and withdrawal