

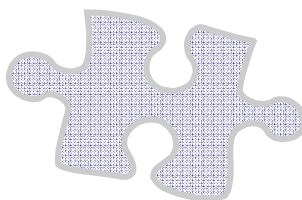
- Do not force your children to hug or kiss anyone they don't want—even close relatives.
- Teach your children that anyone, even someone they know and/or love could touch them in an improper way.
- Tell your children that it's OK to say NO to an adult if the adult is making them feel uncomfortable.
- Tell your children that they should NEVER keep a secret about touching.
- Teach your children the difference between a 'secret' and a 'surprise'.
- Tell your children that if they do get sexually abused to come and tell you; that you will believe them, you will not get angry, you won't blame them for what happened and that no matter what, you will always love them.

Remember

- Talking about sexual abuse (and other sexual topics) is not always easy
- It's OK to feel uncomfortable when talking about sexual abuse; but don't let that stop you.
- Talking about sexual health gets easier with practice
- The earlier you start talking with your child the easier it will be for you both
- By talking and listening, you create an atmosphere for open communication on all topics.
- There are books and materials available which can help make talking and listening to kids easier.

Who do I contact if my child (or someone else's child) tells me that he or she has been sexually abused?

- Family and Children's Services
- Your local police or RCMP



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Child Sexual Abuse: Facts for Families and Friends



SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE Lunenburg County

Promoting Sexual Health Throughout the Lifespan

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is when someone tries to force, trick, or manipulate a child or teen into having sexual contact with them.

Sexual abuse may involve:

- Touching or fondling of the private parts of the body
- Vaginal intercourse
- Anal intercourse
- Oral sex
- Forcing a child to watch someone

Who are the Victims?

The child who has been sexually abused is the victim. Anyone; regardless of sex, race, religion, economic status, etc., may be a victim.

- One in three girls and one in four boys will be sexually abused by the time they reach puberty.
- Children of all ages may be victims of abuse, even children under three years of age, though the most common age for onset of abuse is 9-10 years.

The victim is often insecure and has low self-esteem; such children may be easily fooled, by the offender, into believing that they are “special” for their participation in the sexual act.

Who Sexually Abuses Children?

The person who sexually abuses children is called the offender. About the offender:

- The offender may be a stranger, BUT in 85% of cases, the offender is someone the child knows
- The offender may be a relative, friend, babysitter, or even the child’s mother, father, or step-father.
- The offender is usually male, though in a very few cases (about 1%) the offender is female.
- Offenders come from all economic, ethnic and religious groups
- Offenders are seldom the “dirty old man”; they can be anyone, appearance can’t determine an offender.
- The offender usually has abused more than one victim.
- In many cases the offender was sexually abused as a child.

Truths

- The child is NEVER responsible for the abuse.
- The child does not “seduce” the offender. Seduction is an adult interpretation of an act.
- Sexual abuse is seldom a single, isolated incident—the duration is usually months,; often it lasts for years.
- Children reporting sexual abuse should ALWAYS be believed—they

rarely make up such stories.

- Contrary to what one may hear, the mother is usually unaware that her child is being sexually abused. It is NOT something a mother expects to happen to her child and the offender is very careful not to get caught.

How Can Parents Reduce the Chance of their Children Being Sexually Abused??

Education is the answer. Ignorance creates problems, it does not prevent them. Remember that children properly informed about sexual abuse, and who learn to be confident with their own sexuality, are less likely than uninformed children to become victims.

- Review the rules of sexual abuse prevention like you would any other safety rule.
- Teach your children the proper names of the private parts of their body. Molesters are less likely to victimize those kids because they know that an adult has talked to them about this topic.
- Teach your children that there are several types of touching—good, bad and confusing.
- Teach your children that no one has the right to touch their body without a good reason (e.g. Health and hygiene) or without their permissions.
- Teach your children that they should not be expected to touch the private parts of someone else.